

PLUS CD-ROM 100 ready-made Actions, video lessons and much more!

Adobe Photoshop

Working Smarter

How to perform any
Photoshop task
faster and easier



FocusGuide
From the makers of **Computer Arts**



**132 pages of easy-to-follow tutorials and expert advice
to help develop your Adobe Photoshop skills**

It's time to smarten up

You'll be amazed how much time and effort you can save by working more efficiently. We show you how it's done...

Photoshop is one of those programs that offers numerous ways to perform any given task. This can be a bonus, because it gives us users a great deal of flexibility and allows us to carry out tasks in a way that suits our own way of working. However, with such a wide range of methods on offer, it's also easy to fall into bad habits. This issue of the Adobe Photoshop Focus Guide aims to get your workflow right on track by introducing you to the fastest, slickest and smartest ways to carry out all manner of image-editing tasks.

What's the point in clicking through a lengthy series of menus when all that's really needed is a deft keyboard shortcut? And why waste time carrying out a sequence of commands over and over again when Photoshop can do all the hard work for you, with its Actions, Droplets and batch processing options? Throughout this issue we'll demonstrate ways of employing these labour-saving devices, making you a more efficient Photoshop user than ever before. We'll also demonstrate how to work smarter with all your favourite Photoshop tools, including Brushes, Gradients and the Clone Tool.

Your bonus CD-ROM contains a bundle of useful Photoshop resources, including the fantastic Adobe Photoshop Album 2 SE, which makes it easy to organise and locate your digital images. There's also 30 minutes of exclusive video lessons to demonstrate ways of working smarter, as well as 100 pre-recorded Actions. You'll be working smarter than ever in no time!





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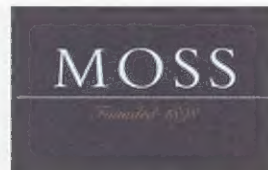
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Our thanks to Moss of Bath for supplying the suit featured on the front cover.

Finding your way

Our handy icons hold the key to a wealth of additional information. Here's what they all mean...

With so much ground to cover on the vast subject of Working Smarter in this Focus Guide, it's been hard work fitting everything in. That's why you'll find the special icons that occupy the margins on each page so useful.

As you leaf through the pages, you'll find a range of eye-catching symbols, each of which indicates an extra nugget of knowledge. The icons enable you to identify exactly what kind of information you're dealing with – for a guide to icon

categories, see below. These handy hints and tips are always relevant to the topic that's being discussed, and will help you develop your Photoshop skills that little bit faster.

Our writers are always experienced Photoshop experts who regularly contribute to our sister magazines, such as *Computer Arts*, *Computer Arts Projects* and *Digital Camera Magazine*. So you can rest assured that all the information they provide is both authoritative and thoroughly tried and tested.



On your CD-ROM

Tutorial files, trial software and more besides is included on your CD-ROM. Every now and then we remind you of this by flagging up the disc icon and listing what's on it. Handy, eh?



Take note

You'll find a number of these nuggets of knowledge scattered throughout the Guide. They're crammed with useful information that complements the main text perfectly.



Top tips

This indicates an expert tip. Anything sheltered beneath this icon is guaranteed to reveal a useful tip, or advice about Photoshop's range of tools, options and features that'll help you work smarter.



Watch out!

The 'skull and crossbones' sign means proceed with caution. You'll find some important points outlined below this icon, which you should certainly take seriously.



Further information

We'd like to tell you absolutely everything, but there's just not enough space. Instead we refer you to other useful resources, such as websites and specialist books for further reading.



Links

When we refer to a website, we may pull out the web address in the sidebar to make it easier for you to read and remember.



Shortcuts

Carrying out common tasks again and again can get a little tedious. Our handy shortcuts show you how to carry out these tasks with a few deft key-presses, saving you lots of time and effort.

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Chapter 1

PERSONALISING PHOTOSHOP'S INTERFACE

In this chapter...

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- ☐ *Personalise your workspace*
- ☐ *Toggle between open files*
- ☐ *Make use of different Screen Modes*
- ☐ *Use metadata to find your images easily*
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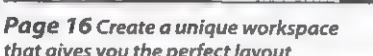
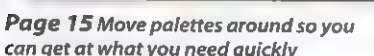
There are always new ways to streamline your workflow with Photoshop. Before you start any project, ask yourself if you're getting the most from the package's fully-customisable interface

Whether you're a deadline-hardened designer or a relative newcomer to Photoshop, there are plenty of ways in which you can work smarter. You may already have looked at ways to speed up your work; perhaps you buy Computer Arts magazine to keep up to date with the latest Photoshop techniques, or work through the tutorials in Digital Camera magazine. Working smarter means putting in time and effort to master new skills.

Doing time

One of the first things you'll need to do is take some time to set up Photoshop to suit your individual

creative and practical needs. Perhaps you already know how to create Actions that combine many steps with one click of the mouse, but haven't got round to making them a regular part of your Photoshop work. This is a false economy, as the ten minutes it takes you to create an automated Droplet will save you dozens of hours of tediously repetitive work. Still, the fact that you're reading this Focus Guide shows that you've already made a commitment to changing the way you work, and over the next nine chapters we'll show you how to streamline your workflow and improve your creative output.



As you spend more time working with Photoshop you'll find yourself working with hundreds of source

- FOCUS GUIDE

Perfect Preferences

Start customising Photoshop by rummaging around in the Preferences settings



Resetting Preferences

While reading this chapter feel free to experiment by fiddling around with Photoshop's Preferences settings – you can easily reset them to the defaults. When opening Photoshop hold down [Alt]+[Control]+[Shift] (PC) or [Option]+[Command]+[Shift] (Mac), and choose to 'Delete the Photoshop Settings File'.

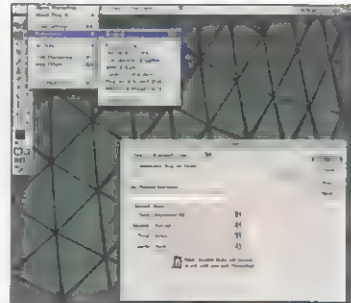
Before you start pushing pixels around, take a few minutes to explore Photoshop's Preferences options to make sure they're set to suit your specific needs. You may never have bothered to explore these settings before, but they're well worth a look, as careful adjustment will make Photoshop function far more effectively. Preferences also affect the look of the package, which can help streamline your workflow; you can even change the colour of the chequered pattern that indicates a transparent background if this suits

your needs. The Preferences dialog box also enables you to specify the unit of measurement used. This is particularly useful if you're working for print, and need to know that your shot is exactly 5x7 inches, for example. Go to the main menu bar and select Edit > Preferences > General (PC), or Photoshop > Preferences > General (Mac). You'll see that there's a whole list of preferences to choose from. The Preferences dialog box lets you scroll through each of the options using the Next and Previous buttons.

SCRATCH DISKS

Give Photoshop breathing space by specifying a scratch disk

Have you ever tried to apply a filter, only to be told that there's not enough RAM? It could be that storing clipboard information and multiple history states is taking up all your PC's memory. Photoshop needs plenty of RAM to function properly, and you can give it more space to work in by going to the Scratch Disk preference setting and allocating additional scratch volumes. The best kind of scratch disk is one that's separate from the hard drive that's running Photoshop. It's well worth investing in an additional FireWire hard drive that you can plug in to your computer. You can then assign this drive as a secondary scratch volume.



Use an external hard drive to act as an additional scratch disk (but don't specify a disk that's on a network)

Guides and Grids

Adjust Photoshop's default Guides and Grid preferences for more accurate working

Photoshop features a wide variety of 'extras' – on-screen components that don't actually print – to help you with your work. Guides, for example, are particularly useful tools that enable you to design layouts more accurately; you can create a DVD cover and use guides to mark out the exact location of the cover's spine, so you can place text in the correct place. If you need to be specific about the position of text and other elements, then you should take some time to tweak the Guides, Grid and Slices



You can use the Preferences dialog box to specify the colour of non-printing extras such as Guides, Slices and the Grid

preferences. Guides also speed up your workflow by allowing objects on separate layers to 'snap' to them.



Hide and seek

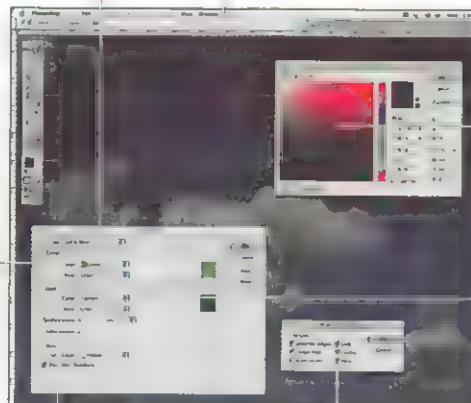
A screen full of extras can sometimes obscure the details of the image you're working on. Hide or show the extras in a second by pressing [Control]+[H] (PC) or [Command]+[H] (Mac).

GUIDE, GRID AND SLICE PREFERENCES

Use the drop-down menu in the Preferences dialog box to find Guides, Grids and Slices, or toggle between preferences using the Next and Previous buttons.

Change the default colour of Photoshop's guides by using this drop-down menu and selecting from nine preset colour options.

Adjust the grid's Gridline setting so that it isn't too busy and distracting. To see the grid go to View > Show > Grid.



To create on-screen guides, first activate the Rulers by pressing [Command]/[Ctrl] +[R]. Drag as many guides as you like from the horizontal or vertical rulers.

You can change a guide or grid's colour using the Custom option to select any colour you like from the Color Picker.

If the extras become a bit overpowering go to View > Show > Show Extras Options. Here you can choose which extras are displayed.

Tidy your desktop

Now it's time for a bit of Photoshop Feng Shui to help you work more efficiently



Finding files

Once you've hidden the distracting clutter of the desktop by using the Screen Mode icons, you won't be able to see your source file thumbnails in their directories. Get into the habit of using the File Browser instead, as a quick way of finding and opening Photoshop documents (see page 18 for more details).

When you've finished exploring Photoshop's various Preferences settings and edited them to suit your needs, Photoshop will remember and save your settings so that they're available when you reboot the software.

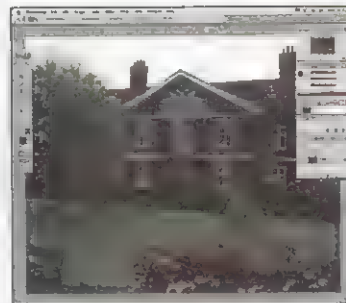
The next job is to sort out your virtual desktop. Start by taking a look at your real desktop – you may well find that old coffee cups are taking up your elbowroom, or perhaps your waste paper bin is overflowing and stray rubbish is getting underfoot. When your office

work area is in a mess it hampers your workflow and stops you concentrating on the creative process; giving your real working environment a good clean-up takes time, but helps put you in a position to work more efficiently. The same principles apply to your virtual working environment. It's very easy to be distracted by seeing icons and desktop wallpaper vying for your attention. Fortunately, Photoshop has some very quick ways to hide unwanted background clutter – see the boxout below.

SCREEN MODES

Hide competing background clutter at the click of a mouse

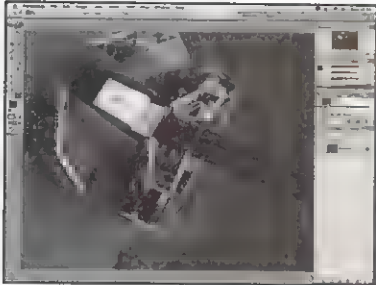
When you first open your Photoshop document it's displayed in Standard Screen Mode. This means that as well as viewing your Photoshop file you can see your desktop background and other open applications. Near the bottom of the toolbox is a row of three icons. The left icon activates the Standard Screen Mode. The middle icon changes the screen mode to Full Screen Mode with Menu Bar. This replaces the background clutter with a neutral grey background, leaving you free to focus on Photoshop. The right icon activates the Full Screen Mode – the grey background becomes black and the top menu bar disappears.



To quickly toggle between each screen mode simply press the [F] key. This helps hide unwanted desktop clutter

Play with your palettes

Organise your Photoshop interface to help you get at what you want quickly



Once you've changed the Screen Mode to hide distracting background elements you can focus on tailoring the Photoshop workspace to suit your requirements. When you open Photoshop it displays the default interface layout – this clutters your work area with a variety of floating palettes. By default, the palettes are stacked in a column at the right-hand side of the screen.



Hide and seek

Once you've closed a palette, you can get it back by going to Window in the main menu and choosing the relevant palette.



Photoshop groups loosely-related palettes together. The Navigator palette is grouped with the Info palette and the Color, Swatch and Styles palettes form another group. The third group consists of the History, Actions and Tool Presets palettes and the final group holds the Layers, Channels and Paths palettes. You can move palette groups around the screen by dragging them.



Palette palaver

If your palette reorganisation goes pear-shaped, don't panic. Simply restore the palettes to their default condition by going to Window > Workspace > Reset Palette Locations.



You can grab each palette by its tab and drag it away from its default group. This enables you to take a closer look at which palettes will be useful for your project. The odds are that you won't need access to every palette at once. You can hide unwanted palette groups by clicking on the red icon at the top of each group.



If the default palette grouping doesn't suit, then do it your way! You can pick and mix palettes to create new groups that contain the palettes most useful to your particular project. Simply drag a palette from one group and place it next to palettes in another group. This is called 'docking'. You can also dock palettes in the Palette Well at the top of the screen.

Personalise your workspace

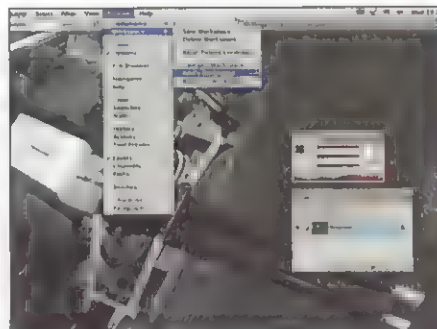
If you share Photoshop with other users you can create and save a user-specific workspace



Deleting workspaces

If a particular workspace is no longer required go to **Window > Workspace > Delete Workspace**. You can select individual workspaces for deletion, or remove them, all with one click.

It's quite possible that you may have to share your copy of Photoshop with multiple users. You might work on a communal computer at college, or have to share with family, and you don't want to have to set up the interface from scratch each time you open the software. Luckily Photoshop lets you save your customised workspace with a unique name. Your colleagues can also customise and save their own layouts, and access them in seconds. Photoshop remembers the exact positions in which you placed



Multiple users can each set up their own customised workspace, which they can access in seconds from the main menu

specific palettes and returns them to those locations. It also remembers how you grouped your palettes.



Default palettes

To make Photoshop always open with the palettes in their default locations go to **Edit > Preferences > General (PC) or Photoshop > Preferences > General (Mac)**. Un-tick the **Save Palette Locations** box.

FINE-TUNE YOUR WORKSPACE

TO SAVE your customised interface go to **Window > Workspace > Save Workspace**. Label the saved workspace, so you can access it easily. Other users can happily set up their own workspace preferences too. You can access each user's settings from the **Workspace** menu.

YOU CAN resize individual or grouped palettes by dragging the bottom of the palette tab to make it any size you like. This will help you make optimum use of your workspace.

USE THE Layers palette options to increase the size of your palette's thumbnails, so that you can more easily identify what they represent. Click on the little triangle icon to the right of the palette tabs.

REDUCE palette clutter by double-clicking at the top of the palette to collapse it to a minimised state. Alternatively, click once on the minimise icon at the top of the palette.

Accessing multiple open files

Full Screen mode is a useful setting, but you still need to be able to get at Photoshop files

As you've worked through this chapter you'll have seen how to set up a unique and uncluttered workspace to help you focus on your creative work. You can now quickly access specific palettes that you require without filling valuable interface space with unnecessary floating windows. All of this initial workspace customisation and preference setting will pay off in the long run, by helping you streamline your workflow.

Using Full Screen mode means that you don't have to be distracted

by other documents and desktop icons. It helps to isolate the Photoshop workspace from the rest of your computer's contents, so you don't have the distraction of seeing a 'you've got mail' message popping up in the background, for example. This isolation will help you to focus on your Photoshop work. However, you will still want to have instant access to multiple open Photoshop files without having to toggle in and out of Full Screen mode. Take a look at the boxout below to discover how you can do this.



Help yourself

If you need additional Photoshop help at any time, select the Help file from the top menu bar. This opens the locally-stored Photoshop Help files in your web browser. You can type a keyword into the search field to quickly find the information you require.

KEEPING TABS ON SCREEN MODES

Toggle through files while staying in Full Screen Mode

Imagine you have three Photoshop files open at once. You are working on one image in Full Screen Mode; this means that the other two open images (the clouds and the dome in our example) are initially hidden. You could press [F] to come out of Full Screen Mode, but you would then see all the images at once, as well as the desktop with all its clutter. You can stay entirely within your carefully-ordered Photoshop environment by bringing the hidden files to the front of the interface one by one. Simply hold down [Control] and press [Tab]. This enables you to toggle through all open Photoshop files without coming out of Full Screen Mode.



You can toggle between multiple open files in Full Screen Mode using the [F] keyboard shortcut

The File Browser

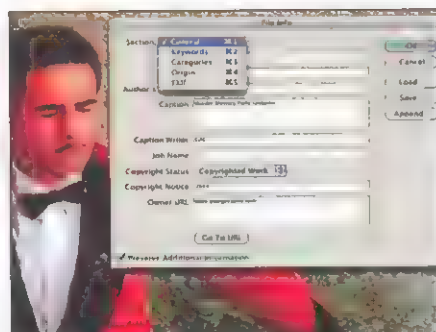
You can do much more than just browse files with this modestly-named tool



Browser window

The File Browser is always close to hand, lurking in the Palette Well. It pops up when you click on its tab. Unleash the Browser by dragging it onto the main workspace so it becomes an expandable floating window.

We've spent a lot of time setting up our Photoshop workspace so that we can immerse ourselves in the package without being distracted by other elements. We could come out of Photoshop and search for files stored in our computer's folders and directories, but why leave the sanctuary of our carefully-constructed workspace if we don't have to? The File Browser does much more than its name suggests. It helps you manage your Photoshop projects by allowing you to edit files without even opening



Go to **File > File Info** to add metadata such as keywords to your images. The File Browser will be able to read this information

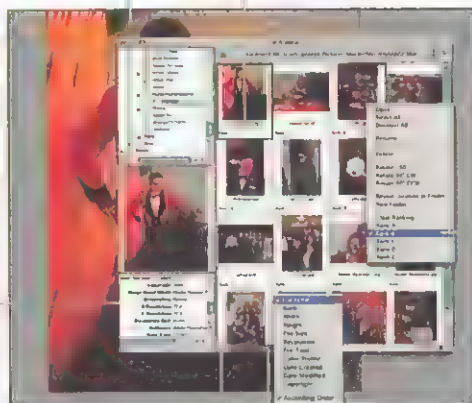
them. You can even right-click on a file's thumbnail and jump directly to the folder in which it's located.

BETTER BROWSING

Take control of the File Browser's windows by interactively resizing them to suit your needs. Click on the window bars, and drag them to a new position.

The Browser reads metadata stored in the images, enabling you to see an image's size and resolution without opening it.

Click here to minimise the amount of space the browser will take up on screen – it will only show thumbnails.



You can use the File Browser to rename existing files without having to open them. Just click on the file name and type in something more appropriate.

Right-click on a thumbnail and assign an alphabetical ranking to each of your shots. You can tell the File Browser to sort by Rank, so it displays your favourite shots first.

Click here to change the way the Browser sorts the files. It can display them according to resolution, width, height and file type – whatever suits your needs.

Are you sitting comfortably?

There are factors away from the computer screen which can affect how you work

We've looked at optimising Photoshop to help us work smarter, but now let's step away from the computer for a moment and look at your working environment. Working smarter isn't simply about playing around with Preferences settings; if you're not comfortable at your keyboard, your creative performance will be impaired.

Bear in mind that external factors can affect your work. Daylight changes as the day progresses, giving you an inconsistent perception of on-screen colours.



Avoid garish desktop patterns when working in Normal Screen Mode, as these will interfere with your colour perception. A neutral grey is best

Close the curtains and install 5000k bulbs that will give you a light with a constant colour temperature.



The right light

Don't stare at a bright monitor in a darkened room – this will give you a false perception of your project's colours. Match the intensity of your environment's light to that of your monitor.

A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

- ❑ **STARING AT** a fixed focal length isn't good for the long-term health of your eyes. Give your eyes a break, and exercise them by focusing on objects in the distance.
- ❑ **MAKE SURE** that you've got a comfortable chair, which you can adjust so that your feet are flat on the ground and your knees are level with your hips. Make sure that your elbows are at desktop height. Maintaining good posture will help you avoid developing neck and back problems.
- ❑ **HELP YOURSELF** to maintain a comfortable posture by raising or angling your monitor, so that you can see it without having to excessively tilt your head up or down.
- ❑ **TAKE REGULAR** breaks and stretch your legs, even if it's only to make a cup of coffee. This will help improve your circulation.



Watch your back

For more information on maintaining a perfect posture in work (and even on the way to work in your car!), check out www.spine-health.com. Here you'll discover how to improve your posture in the workplace.

SELECTION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

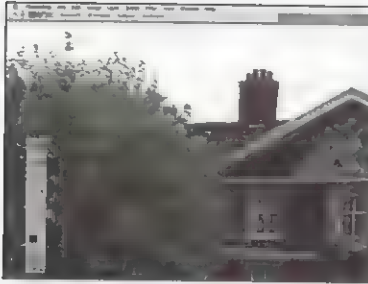
Photoshop enables you to select and isolate objects using a variety of powerful tools and techniques. But how do you select the right tool for a particular job?

There's more than one way to skin a cat, according to the old saying, and when it comes to working with Photoshop, there's certainly more than one way to select and isolate objects within an image. In fact, Photoshop has so many different ways of enabling you to select and cut out an object that we've devoted a whole chapter to the topic.

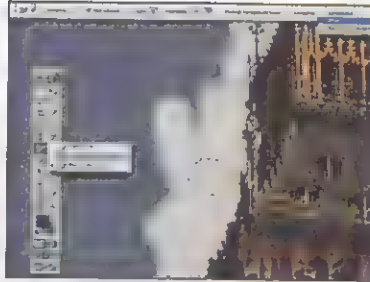
Cut and dried

Cutting things out is exactly the sort of 'bread and butter' job that Photoshop has always excelled at. Typically, you might want to use the package to select and cut out a drab

overcast sky in a photograph, and replace it with a dazzling sunset. That kind of job is a piece of cake for the Magic Wand Tool, providing that the sky is evenly white or grey. Or perhaps you want to cut out a person who's standing against a complex background, so that you can paste them into another location for a creative project? The Magic Wand would have to make its excuses and leave when faced with a task such as this, but it would be a run-of-the-mill job for the Pen Tool and its faithful sidekick the Paths palette. We really are spoiled for choice when it comes to Photoshop's selection tools.



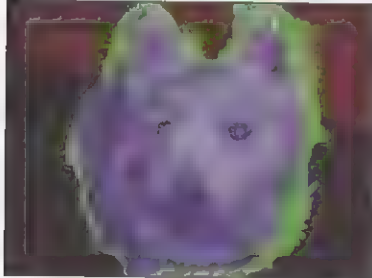
Page 24 Here we meet a one-click selection wonder – the Magic Eraser



Page 25 See how the Background Eraser samples and deletes unwanted areas



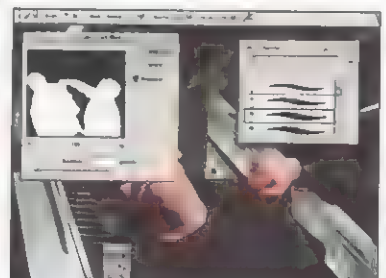
Page 26 For simple jobs use a simple tool – the Polygonal Lasso



Page 29 Got fluffy edges to deal with? We roll out the Extract filter



Page 30 The Pen tool and the Paths palette – a knockout combination!



Page 32 Unleash the hidden power of Layer Masks for non-destructive editing

Tools of the trade

You might be quite content using a couple of specific tools for all your selection needs. But, as the whole idea of this book is to help you to work smarter, let us tempt you to try out some alternative selection tools. You might be a Pen Tool kind of person, but why not give the Magnetic Lasso Tool a chance to prove its mettle? You might even become a convert once you've taken some of the other selection tools for a test drive. After working through this chapter, you'll have a far better understanding of how these different tools work, so that you can work smarter by choosing the right tool

for a particular type of selection job.

The Magic Wand and Background Eraser might vie for our attention with promises of a quick and easy fix for our needs, but each selection tool has its own strengths and weaknesses, as we'll be discovering as we work through this chapter. But, however challenging a particular selection might be, one thing's for sure – Photoshop has a wide enough toolset to enable it to eat even the most complex selections for breakfast. Over the next 12 pages we're going to throw a wide variety of challenges at Photoshop's selection tools, so read on to see how they shape up...

Magic Wand Tool

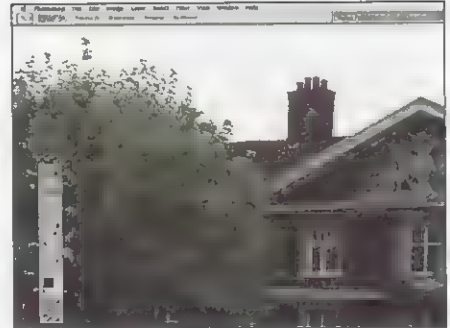
This simple tool is surprisingly effective at selecting similarly-coloured areas of an image



Add and subtract

You can build on existing selections (or remove unwanted parts of selections) by using the Add and Subtract icons in the Options bar. This is a powerful way of fine-tuning your selection, until you've chosen the pixels you want to delete.

There's no point spending 10 minutes drawing an intricate path around an object with the Pen Tool [P] if the image's unwanted elements can be removed in seconds with a couple of clicks from the Magic Wand Tool [W]. Analyse the photo you're going to work on to decide which tool will be the most effective. While the Magic Wand is limited compared to some selection tools, it's still very effective when used on the right photograph. It works by sampling and selecting similarly-coloured pixels. You can



One click of the Magic Wand Tool in the evenly-lit skyline was enough to select this part of the image

fine-tune the selection by increasing the Wand's sensitivity, so it captures a wider range of pixels.



More menus

Once you've started making a selection with the Magic Wand, you can edit it by going to the menu bar and clicking on Select > Modify. Here you can use Contract, which is a powerful way of tightening a selection to lose any remaining unwanted pixels from the selected area.

SELECTION JARGON EXPLAINED

TOLERANCE – This refers to the tool's sensitivity. In the above image the default Tolerance value of 32 was enough to select the white sky. A lower value makes the tool more fussy, and may result in a smaller selection area.

CONTIGUOUS – If the Contiguous option is turned on, then the Magic Wand will only select pixels adjacent to the sampled area. Turn this option off to make the wand select similar pixels throughout the image (like those hidden amongst the leaves in our example image).

ANTI-ALIASED – Ticking this setting in the Options bar gives the selection a nice smooth edge.

USE ALL LAYERS – Tick this option to make the Wand select similar pixels from every layer in the project.

GROW – This is a useful part of the Select menu. Use it to increase an existing selection. It's the opposite of the Contract option, see left.

Marvellous marquees

Combine primitive marquee shapes to create more sophisticated selections

We started this chapter by wheeling out some of Photoshop's 'Big Gun' selection tools, like the Magic Wand Tool. But big isn't always best, as working smarter means not going in for time-consuming overkill. Sophisticated tools like the Magnetic Lasso aren't always appropriate when something more basic will do the same job faster. Sometimes a selection might be a simple shape, like a rectangular hunk of brickwork or a football. For this type of task the Marquee Tools will give you fast results. With the



Use the Marquee Tools' Options bar to add or subtract simple shapes to or from each other to fine-tune your selections

right shortcuts, the simple Marquee Tools can be combined together to make more complex selections.



Boolean operations

Users of 3D modelling packages such as Maya use spheres or cubes to cut holes in each other to create new shapes. These primitive shapes can also be combined to create new shapes. You can perform a similar Boolean operation with Photoshop's 2D marquee tools, to create unique selection shapes.

MAKING THE MOST OF MARQUEES

TO MAKE a perfect square or circular selection, hold down the [Shift] key as you draw with Rectangular or Elliptical Marquee Tools. This will constrain their shapes.

WHEN YOU draw a shape with a Marquee Tool, it expands using the shape's starting point as a fixed corner for the selection. To make the starting point the centre of the shape, hold down the [Alt] key.

WHEN YOU'RE modifying a selection using the Add and Subtract options, use keyboard shortcuts instead of clicking on the icons in the Options bar. If you're using the Subtract from Selection option, quickly switch to Add to Selection by holding down the [Shift] key. The minus symbol next to the cursor will change to a plus symbol.

USE THE Style option in the Options bar to constrain a Marquee Tool to a specified size or aspect ratio if required.



Underground.jpg

On the CD you'll find the source image of a London Underground sign. Practise combining Marquee Tools by using the Rectangular Tool to select 'Underground'. Click on Add to Selection in the Options bar and use the Elliptical Marquee Tool to select the round part of the sign.

Magic Eraser

This is not a subtle tool, but it can quickly clobber unwanted pixels



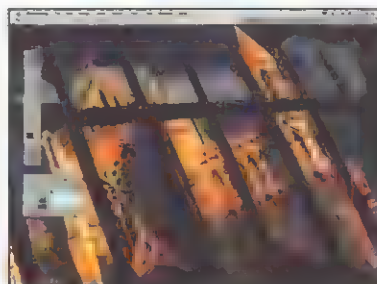
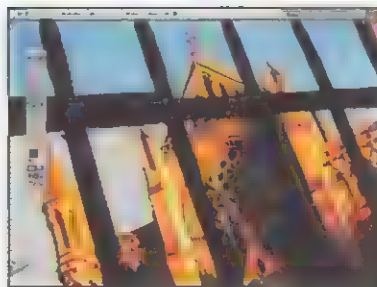
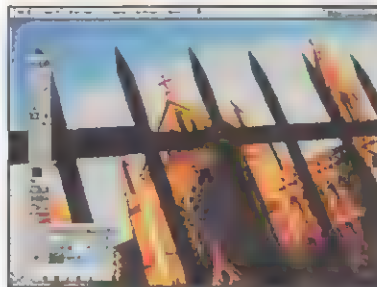
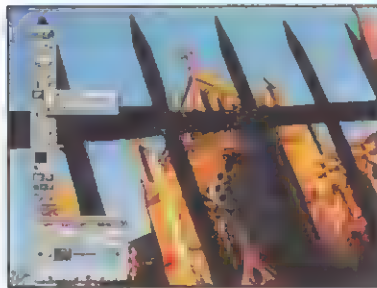
Unlocked layers

Normally, when you edit a flattened Photoshop file you have to double-click on the layer thumbnail in the Layers palette to unlock it first. This gets rid of the little padlock icon. The Magic Eraser bypasses this process by unlocking the layer as soon as you use the tool.



Clever combo

As with all the selection tools in this Chapter, you can combine them with a Quick Mask (see page 33) and a soft brush to fine-tune them for ultimate control of your selection process.



The Magic Eraser Tool [E] is like a turbo-charged version of the Magic Wand. It's even more of a one-click wonder, as it can select similar pixels in your image and delete them in one go. You'll find the Magic Eraser lurking in the toolbox with the other versions of the Eraser Tool – click and hold the cursor over the Eraser icon and select the Magic Eraser when it pops up.

Removing the sky from this image requires quite a bit of work, as the sky isn't an even colour – it's a gradient from blue to white. To get the Magic Erase Tool to select and delete such a wide range of sky colour we could increase the tolerance from the default 32 to a higher value, say 65. However, this would also delete similar areas of white within the building.

If the Magic Erase Tool doesn't achieve the desired result, hit [Command]+[Z] to undo the last edit. To go back multiple steps press [Shift]+[Command]+[Z]. With the Magic Eraser still active, click the Contiguous option to limit its range of activity. Now it will only select similar pixels adjacent to the ones you click on, so you'll avoid creating unwanted holes in the building.

Mop up any stray sections of sky using the Magic Eraser. Feel free to adjust the tolerance setting as required. To catch all the sky behind the branches, turn Contiguous off and experiment with a Tolerance setting that will delete unwanted pixels without erasing similar pixels elsewhere in the image. You can then drop a new sky into the image on a separate layer.

Background Eraser Tool

If you've got some tricky, detailed edges to isolate, try this tool for size

While the Magic Eraser is handy for blasting large areas of unwanted pixels out of existence, it's rather like going fishing with dynamite; you get quick results, but they're less than subtle. That's fine for jobs that have large chunks of unwanted colour to get rid of, but not so handy for more intricate selections. This is why it's great that Photoshop offers such a wide variety of selection tools, each with their own customisable options.

There are certain types of selection job that are better suited to the skills

of the Magic Eraser's more versatile cousin, the Background Eraser. This tool offers far more control over more challenging tasks, such as making a complex selection around ornately-shaped objects, like Big Ben in our example. The famous landmark has lots of fragile, detailed edges that would give most selection tools a run for their money, thanks to little patches of blue sky hidden between the gothic arches and crenulations. Check out the boxout to see how the Background Eraser deals with such a challenge...



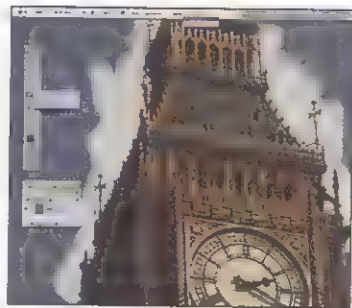
Faster erasing

To speed things up use the Brush Preset Picker to increase the brush size of the Background Eraser, so that it wipes out larger chunks of your unwanted image. Click the mouse again to resample and delete subtle variations of colour.

BYE-BYE BACKGROUND!

Cut out complex shapes quickly with the Background Eraser

You need to do a bit of tinkering in the Background Eraser's Options bar to optimise the tool for a complex selection job. Select the Background Eraser from the toolbox, and in the Options bar set Sampling to Once. Click with the mouse to sample a section of blue sky. The background swatch icon will change colour to indicate the pixels marked for deletion. Hold down the mouse button, and spray the eraser's brush around the image to wipe out all similarly-coloured pixels. As you spray around the edge of a building, pixels of other colours will remain protected as the sampled pixels vanish. Again, tweak the Tolerance setting to get the best results.



The Background Eraser eradicates the pixels making up the blue sky without harming pixels of different colours

Polygonal Lasso Tool

In the battle for selection speed, you can rely on the Lasso tools to put up a good fight!



Quick retreat

When drawing straight selection lines using the Polygonal Lasso Tool, you can take a step back if you make a mistake by pressing the [Delete] key. This removes the last section of the selection.

The most basic selection tools in Photoshop's arsenal are the Lasso Tools. These 'cannon fodder' are handy for quick, rough-and-ready selection jobs where pinpoint accuracy isn't required. The default Lasso allows you to draw a freehand selection. Its Polygonal Lasso Tool comrade draws selections made up of straight lines. Of the two, the freehand Lasso Tool is less effective, due to the fact that as soon as you let go of the mouse button the start point and end point of the selection are joined together with a straight

line. To reselect the desired part of an image you have to start again.

The Polygonal Lasso is far more useful, as you can click the mouse button again to anchor parts of the selection to the image. You can let go of the mouse button, and the tool will wait patiently for you to continue with the selection. While these two versions of the lasso may lack the sophistication of other selection tools, they're still useful for quick selections if you combine them with certain keyboard shortcuts – see the boxout below.

MODIFYING LASSOS

Combine the Lasso and Polygonal Lasso Tools for fast selections

The default Lasso and Polygon Lasso live together in the toolbox, and they're perfectly interchangeable if you know the right keyboard combination. To get the freehand Lasso Tool to draw a straight line, hold down [Alt] ([Option] on a Mac) and click once to place the start of the line. Click again to select the line's end position. A perfectly straight line will join the two points together. You can then carry on drawing a freehand selection. The Polygon Lasso can be persuaded to let you to jump to drawing a freehand selection option by using the same keyboard shortcut. Using the [Alt] key, the two versions of the Lasso Tool become almost identical



Create a combination of straight and freehand selections using the Polygonal Lasso Tool with the [Alt] key

Magnetic Lasso

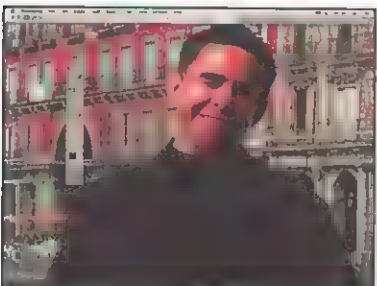
For greater accuracy and faster selection, unleash this extremely clever tool



Sometimes a selection task is just too intricate to trust to your freehand drawing skills. When cutting out people in particular, it's easy to make a mess, and end up with a shoddy selection. The Magnetic Lasso Tool combines the fluidity of the freehand Lasso Tool with an automated element to help keep your selection fast and accurate.



This shot has too much background detail in it to use the Background Eraser or the Magic Wand. The strong contrast in colours between the subject and background make this an ideal job for the Magnetic Lasso Tool. Select the tool by holding the cursor over the Lasso section of the toolbox. Click on the edge of your subject to place the first anchor point and draw freehand around the subject.



As you draw, the tool automatically clings to the edge of the subject and places anchor points along the selection path. Try using the default options. If the tool gets lost, or starts selecting unwanted background details, reduce the Width setting in the Options bar and increase the Edge Contrast value. With the right settings it should stick to your chosen subject's outline like a magnet.



Once you've got your tool options set correctly you should be able to create an accurate selection very quickly. Indeed, with its 'magnetic' abilities, this could be considered the fastest selection tool in the toolbox for complex jobs like this. If the tool does get confused at any time you can give it a helping hand by placing the occasional anchor point manually by clicking.



Pick and mix

No selection tool needs to work in isolation. For maximum effectiveness combine tools together. Once you've used the Magnetic Lasso Tool, fine-tune any imperfections in the selection by jumping to Quick Mask mode and using a brush (see page 33).



Know your weapons

Each selection tool in this chapter has its own particular strengths. The Extract filter on the next page is great for tackling fur, for example. The more you experiment with the selection tools available, the more you'll get to know which tool to use for a particular type of job.

Extract filter

You can conquer the most challenging selections using this excellent tool



Taming the dog

Check out the interface of the Extract filter in our annotated screenshot. Then follow the walkthrough on the next page to see this amazing tool make mincemeat of this challenging selection.

Sometimes Photoshop's versatile selection tools will encounter a challenge that's beyond them, like when faced with the fluffy pooch on our cover CD (Extraction.tif). The Background Eraser and the Magic Wand need a relatively clean background, but our canine's background is speckled and busy. To make matters worse, the more distant parts of the dog are out of focus due to a shallow depth of field, making a clean selection all but impossible. In a situation like this we must call on the special skills of



Soft, fluffy edges overlapping a busy background make cutting out this dog the perfect job for the Extract filter

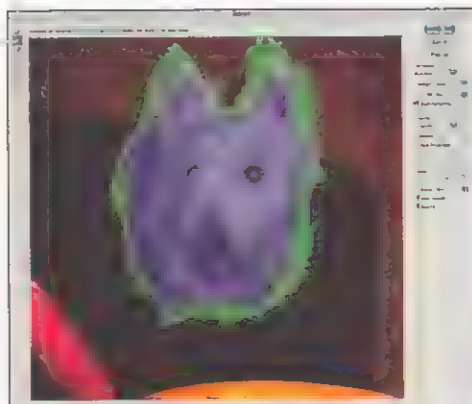
the Extract filter. This intelligent filter has all that we'll need to tackle such a daunting challenge.

THE EXTRACT FILTER INTERFACE

Use the Edge Highlighter Tool to draw a selection line around the object you want to keep. Hit [B] to activate it.

When you've selected the edge of the object, fill in the area you want to keep using the Fill Tool.

To see how effective the selection will be, press Preview. You can then use the Clean Up Tool [C] to fine-tune problem areas.



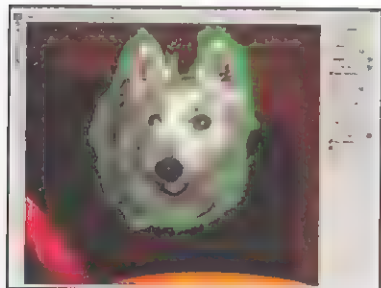
Make the brush size large enough to select all of the hairs that are overlapping the background.

If required, change the colour of the Edge Highlighter Tool from its default green (green might not be suitable if the object is on a green background, for example).

For automated assistance in making your selection, turn on the Smart Highlighting option.

Extraction in action

Now you know your way around the Extract filter, it's time to put this tool to the test

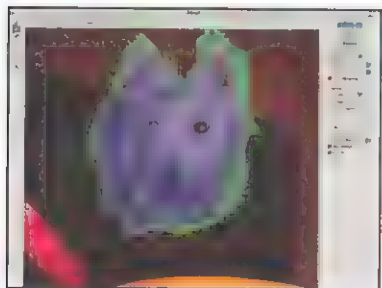


Open the file *Extraction.tif* from the CD. Go to **Filter > Extract**. The Extract filter interface appears. Select the **Edge Highlighter Tool**. Tick the **Smart Highlighting** option. Select a large brush and draw round the outline of the dog. The **Smart Highlighting** option will resize the brush as you follow the dog's outline. Make sure that the furry edges overlapping the background are selected.

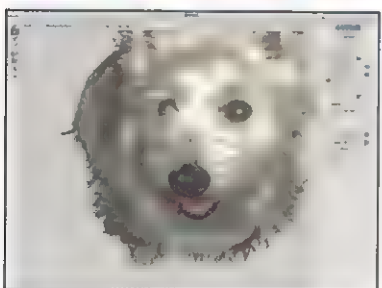


Erase Tool

You can fine-tune the green extraction selection by using the **Erase Tool** to modify sections of the outline. Combine this with the filter's **Preview** option to see how the extraction is shaping up.



Once you've selected the subject's outline, choose the **Fill Tool** from the Extract filter's mini-toolbar. Click inside the green outline to tell the Extract filter which section of the image you want to keep. The dog will turn an alarming blue colour (you can change this colour to something more suitable if you prefer).

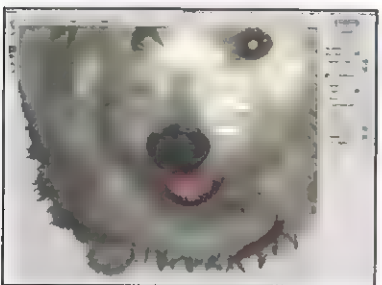


Click **Preview** to see how the tool is tackling the selection. If it has missed lots of the dog's hairs, click **[Control]+[Z]** (PC) or **[Command]+[Z]** (Mac) to undo the preview. Use the **Edge Highlighter Tool** to add more green to the outline. Re-fill the inside of the selection and **Preview** again. Once you've got a fairly successful selection you can tidy up remaining parts of the outline.



Smooth operator

Sometimes the Extract filter adds jagged areas to your selection. Soften these up by increasing the value of the **Smooth**. Always preview the result of editing this setting, as it will add blur to your selection.



The odds are that some parts of the dog's fur will be hidden, and you'll still see the odd bit of unwanted background detail. This is where the extra tools come into play. Select the **Clean Up Tool [C]**. Spray this around the outline to hide any unwanted details. Press the **[Alt]** key to make hidden details solid. Adjust the brush size for greater control. This tool helps to fine-tune the mask.

The Pen Tool in action

The Pen Tool's editable attributes help to pack a punch when making complex selections

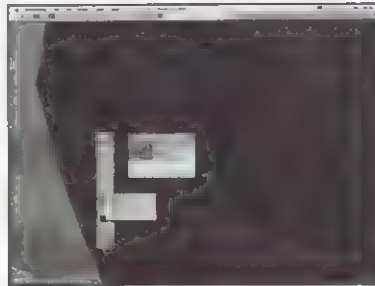


Retreat!

If your path creation takes a wrong turn and you're unhappy with your last few anchor points, press [Command]/[Ctrl]+[Shift]+[Z] as you like to go back a few steps. Then pick up the Path from the last point you were happy with.



The Pen Tool is used to isolate the relevant parts of an image by creating a combination of curved and straight lines. Let's use it to move this punch-up from a boring car park to a more interesting location. Open the file *Punch.tif* from the cover CD. In the Paths palette click the Create New Path icon (otherwise the Pen Tool will draw filled shapes instead of an outline).



Select the Pen Tool [P] from the toolbox. Place the cursor at the edge of the men, and click the mouse to place your first anchor point. Move your cursor along the outline, then click to place a second anchor point. A path segment will join the two points. Continue the path by placing anchor points around the two fighters. As you build up the path you can see it appearing on the Paths palette thumbnail.



Sharp bends

When a path has to take a sharp turn (like going off at a right-angle), it's a good idea to place two anchor points on top of each other just before the path needs to turn. This will help you get a nice sharp turn in the path, rather than a gentle curve.



Using straight lines you'd have to place lots of anchor points to select a curved shape. Fortunately, you can create a curved segment with the Pen Tool. Simply place a new point, and drag the mouse while holding the mouse button down. This will enable you use curved segments to quickly select large areas of your image. Curves are the secret to faster path creation.



To select more complex areas, like the edge of this man's hair, place anchor points more closely together. To stop them appearing too sharp and creating a 'cut-out' look, drag the mouse as you place each point to add a little curve to each segment. Don't be afraid to bash out a path quickly. As we'll see on the next page, one of the strengths of this method is that you can edit paths later on.

Modifying a path

Don't worry if your selection isn't perfect – it's easy to fine-tune your path



To complete the path place the last anchor point on top of the first. The Pen Tool icon will change to display a small circle, indicating that it will close the path. The finished path changes to a solid line and the anchor points vanish. If the path needs to be fine-tuned, go to the toolbox and check out the additional Pen Tool options available by holding the cursor over the Pen Tool icon.



Pick up a path

Unlike with other selection tools you can interrupt your Pen Tool selection and come back to it later. Simply reselect the path, pick up the Pen Tool and carry on from where you left off. The Pen Tool icon will change to show a little slanted line, indicating that it will pick up and continue drawing the existing path.



To place additional anchor points on an existing path click on the Add Anchor Point version of the Pen Tool. Place it on the Path and click to add a new anchor point. You can curve the segments that join this point to adjacent points by dragging the new point's curve handles. Delete any problem points using the Delete Anchor Point Tool.

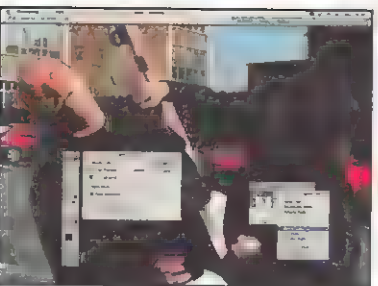


Clipping paths

Once you've created a path to isolate elements of your image, you can use the Paths palette options to save a Clipping Path that other designers can use. This Clipping Path can even be attached to a .jpg file.



Another way of fine-tuning your path is to use the Direct Selection Tool. This lives in the toolbox, just above the Pen Tool. With this tool selected you can click on an existing path and move any of its anchor points to new positions. You can also use it to select and adjust curves between points. The Direct Selection Tool can be activated while you're drawing a path by hitting the [Alt] key.



The great thing about Paths is the fact that you can add new paths to the image to make sure every element is selected. Just pick the Pen Tool, and draw a new Path to select other unwanted areas, like the gap between our two pugilists. To turn the path into a selection click on the Paths tab and select the Make Selection option. To give the selection a soft edge set the feather to 1.

Marvellous layer masks

You can fine-tune your selections to perfection by using a layer mask



Black and white

Layer masks use black to make the corresponding part of a layer 100 per cent transparent. White on a layer mask makes the layer 100 per cent solid. Levels of grey allow different levels of layer transparency.

You may not be aware of it, but some of the selection tools that you've been using in this chapter have involved creating masks. Masks hide certain parts of a layer, but they don't permanently erase them. This allows you to modify a mask to show or hide parts of an image. The Extract filter uses the green outline that you draw around an object to create a mask. The Extract filter's Clean Up Tool also uses this mask to allow you to tidy up the selection by restoring masked pixels (or hiding unmasked



Here's a close-up of the layer mask that allows us to put our fighting fellows into another location, by hiding the original photo's background

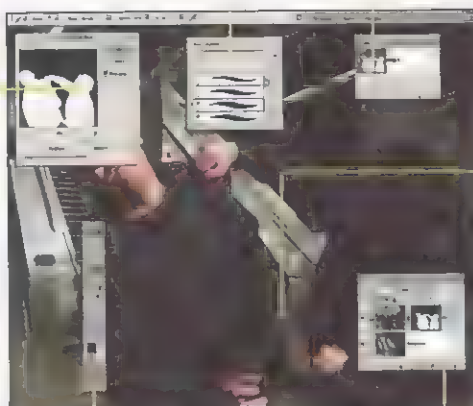
ones). As no pixels are destroyed you can tweak a mask as much as you want until the selection is perfect.

IMPROVE SELECTIONS WITH A LAYER MASK

Make your mask modifications more effective by using the Brush Preset Picker to adjust the brush softness and size.

Mix the masked edges with the background layer by applying a low-value Blur filter to the layer mask.

To restore hidden pixels, use a white brush. Press X to swap the foreground colour between black and white.



Turn a path into a selection. Then go to the Layers palette. You'll see the dotted 'marching ants' line indicating the path.

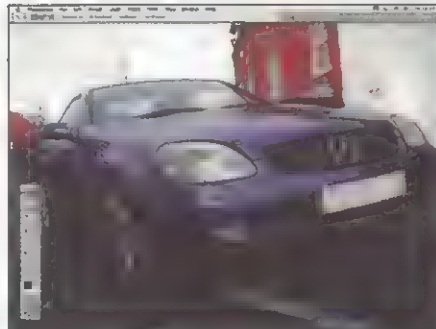
Select the layer mask thumbnail, then spray a black brush onto the image to remove unwanted pixels.

With the selection active, click on the Add a Mask icon. This will use the path to create a layer mask that hides the unwanted areas of the image.

Quick Mask

The Quick Mask is a selection tool's best friend when it becomes difficult to isolate pixels

Sometimes a simple selection tool like the Magic Wand needs a little bit of help to make a perfect selection. It might be the case that parts of the sky are reflected in other parts of the scene, making it difficult to isolate the desired pixels. We don't want to delete bits of ground that have inadvertently been selected due to their having a similar pixel value to the sky. We could try using the Subtract from Selection option in the tool's option bar to tidy up the selection. This is fine for dealing with large areas, but a nightmare



The Magic Wand is struggling to isolate the white sky without selecting white pixels reflected in the car's paintwork. A Quick Mask can fix this

when it comes to deselecting smaller, fiddly selections. This is where a Quick Mask comes to the rescue.



Toggle

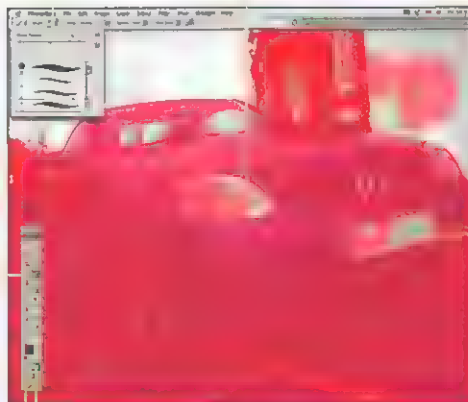
You can add to or subtract from your Quick Mask selection using a black or white brush. Quickly toggle between the two colours by hitting the [X] key. Using this technique you can quickly fine-tune your Quick Mask to get the perfect selection.

TIDY UP WITH A QUICK MASK

Edit the size of the brush using the Preset Picker so that you can quickly paint over any unwanted selected areas.

To deselect parts of the image from the selection, such as the headlights and the white wall, choose a black airbrush.

When you've finished editing in Quick Mask mode, click here to return to Standard mode. You'll see the Magic Wand selection has changed to fit the mask.



We've used the Magic Wand Tool to try and select the white sky. The car's headlights should be entirely red but they're not, indicating that they're still selected.

As you paint out unwanted selections they turn red. Restore masked areas to the selection by changing the Foreground colour to white.

Once you've made a selection, click here in the toolbox to activate the Quick Mask mode [Q]. The Quick Mask gives a clear indication of the problem areas.

Chapter 3

NEW WAYS TO SPEED UP YOUR WORK

There are many wonderful features in Photoshop that you may not even be aware of – so let us take you on a guided tour, and show you how you can work smarter, and faster

One of the amazing things about Photoshop is its immense size. There's no way that we're ever going to know it all! If we watched someone else using the package it wouldn't be long before we saw them using an aspect of Photoshop that we had never seen before, no matter how experienced we were with the software.

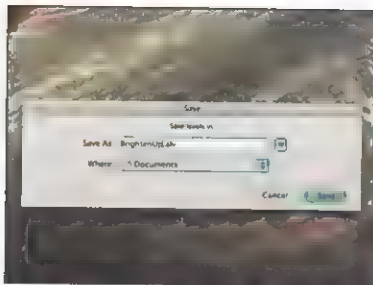
Undiscovered country

If Photoshop were a country it would be so vast that much of it would still be unexplored, and tourists visiting from foreign lands would need a guidebook with them to help them make the most of their

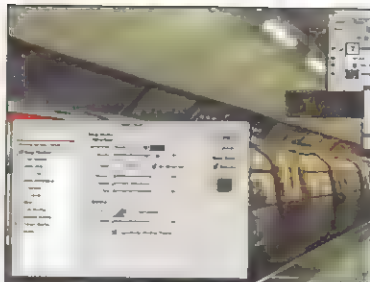
trip. Imagine this Focus Guide as your guidebook – it's designed to show you places of interest within Photoshop, and to help you plan your route for a pleasant trip around the software – we'll even point out some potential pitfalls which you should steer clear of.

Think differently

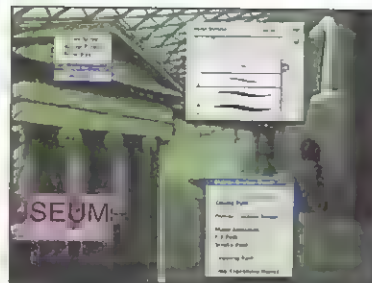
People visit other countries for a variety of reasons, just as they use Photoshop for a variety of different tasks. Some tourists go to the same resort every year because they are comfortable and familiar with that particular region, and when it comes to using Photoshop you may well



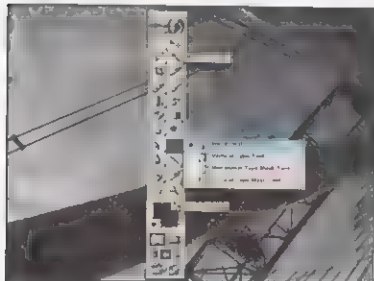
Page 36 Once you've customised a particular setting, save and use it again



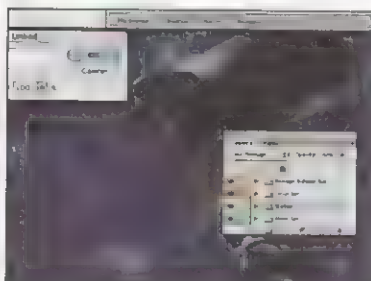
Page 38 Avoid repeating jobs by applying an existing style to new layers



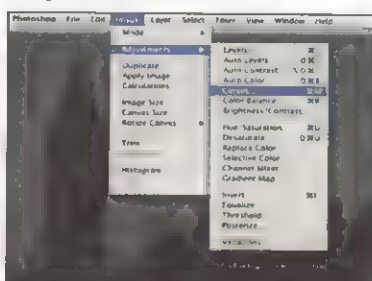
Page 40 Unleash a tool's full power using context-sensitive menus



Page 42 Jump instantly from tool to tool at the stroke of a key (or two)



Page 47 Use layer sets to keep your Layers palette lean and mean



Page 49 Speed up your workflow by using killer keyboard shortcuts

be stuck in something of a rut in relation to the way you work. Perhaps you revisit the same tools and techniques to cut out your images, for example; as the previous chapter demonstrated, there are many different ways to get Photoshop to do the same thing. While you might be happy working in a certain way, think how much happier you'll be when you can do the same things more quickly, making you more productive.

Unlimited uses

You may well use Photoshop for specific, limited purposes, and therefore you be unaware of many

of the other features that the software has to offer. Reading this Focus Guide will help to make you aware of other aspects of Photoshop that you can use to enhance your workflow, and having such a knowledge-packed guide to hand will help you to focus on the areas that are relevant to your work, whatever you're using the software for. This chapter will give you some general tips that will help you streamline the way in which you work. From handy keyboard shortcuts to creating time-saving Actions and Droplets, this chapter will show you lots of ways to get you working smarter.

Save settings – save time

Save yourself valuable time by saving and reusing carefully-created settings



No-go areas

To make your life easier when it comes to reloading saved settings, Photoshop will grey out any settings that apply to other image adjustment options. This will help you to find compatible settings quickly.

Most photographic images we work on tend to need a little adjustment. We might need to push up the colour saturation, or cool the colour temperature. Sometimes we might get away with hitting Auto Contrast to enhance the blacks and whites of an underexposed shot. At other times we may spend a huge amount of time wrestling with curves to rescue a particularly poor shot. To work smarter we need to make the most of the time-saving options Photoshop offers us. Many of the adjustment options allow us



Save common image adjustments so you can quickly load and apply them to other images without having to re-do lots of level tweaking

to save our settings, so that we can load them and apply them to similar images at the click of a mouse.



Sarcophogus.jpg

Practise tweaking the black and white levels using our Egyptian sarcophagus shot. It's a little flat and dull, and needs brightening up. Open Sarcophogus.jpg and go to Image > Adjustments > Levels. Once you've tweaked the levels, save your own customised settings. Then reload them, and apply them to another shot.

SAVING YOUR SETTINGS

WHEN YOU save a setting, make sure it's being stored somewhere sensible, so that you can find and reload it later. If necessary, create a directory or folder in Photoshop's own directory called My Settings.

PHOTOSHOP makes you save different image settings with a different extension to help you differentiate between the different types of saved setting. A saved level is indicated by the extension .alv. A saved Hue/Saturation setting has the extension .ahu.

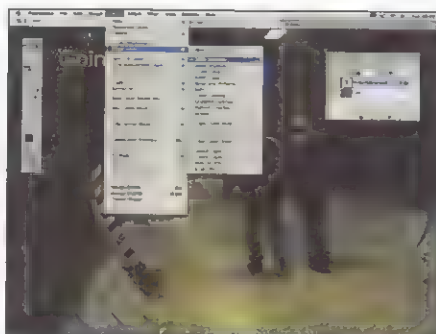
LABEL YOUR saved settings sensibly, so you can quickly recognise what they do before loading them back in. Our example level adjustment setting was saved as BrightenUp.alv.

AS WELL as allowing you to save Hue/Saturation and levels settings, you can also save settings for popular image adjustment options such as Curves, Replace Colour, Selective Colour and Variations.

Layer palette shortcuts

You don't have to rummage in the main menu bar when there are shortcuts close to hand

Think of the many minutes you spend each day shoving the mouse around the desktop to send the cursor to-ing and fro-ing around the Photoshop interface. You might be positioning text in one part of the screen, then zooming up to the main menu bar to open the Layer Styles options. Working like this might seem to be taking up a negligible amount of extra time, but those menu-chasing minutes will add up in the long run. Try pressing the [F] key a couple of times to set the interface to Full Screen Mode. You



When editing layers, why spend extra time in the main menu bar when layer-related menu commands are easier to access?

can then utilise layer-editing shortcuts, which can be accessed from the floating Layers palette.



Layer properties

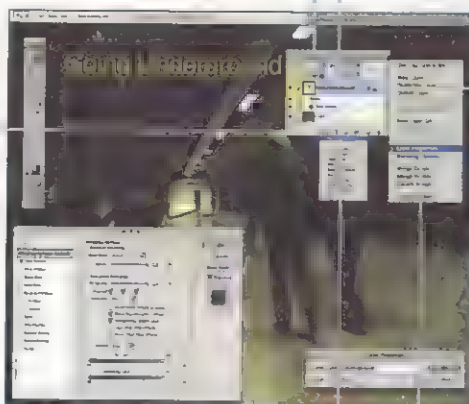
You can also quickly access a layer's properties and other layer-related menu items by right-clicking [PC] or Control-clicking [Mac] on the layer's thumbnail to get a pop-up menu.

LAYER-EDITING SHORTCUTS

The Paths palette has its own collection of shortcut icons, so you don't have to use the top menu bar.

Use the shortcut icons at the bottom of the Layers palette to access popular layer-editing options, such as Add Layer Mask.

Clicking on the Blending Options shortcut in the Layers palette gives you access to the Layer Styles window. Here you can add effects like Drop Shadow.



An alternative way of accessing the Layer Styles window is to double-click on the relevant thumbnail in the Layers palette.

Collapse (or open) the list of applied layer effects by clicking on this icon. This will help to keep your interface free from clutter.

Clicking on this option opens up a wide selection of popular layer-related commands and menu options, like Layer Properties.

Mass application of layer styles

You can apply a group of existing layer styles to a new layer in one easy operation



Drag and drop

You can quickly apply individual edited layer styles to new layers by dragging them from one layer to the other. In this way you can pick and mix the styles you want to feature on multiple layers.



Layer styles offer powerful ways of enhancing your designs. However, editing and experimenting with layer styles can take a great deal of time. You can add multiple layer styles to a single layer, and build these up to create the effect you're after. Each style has its own values and settings. Re-typing the same values and settings to apply these styles to other layers can take up a lot of time.

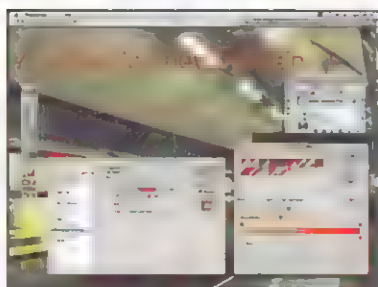


Double-click

Another way of accessing the Layer Styles window is to double click on a layer's thumbnail icon. This is an alternative to using the shortcut icon at the bottom of the palette.



We'll add and edit a group of layer styles on one layer, then look at a much faster way to apply the multiple styles to a new layer. Open the file *Train.tif*. Type in some text (we'll edit the colour later using another layer style). Use the shortcuts on the previous page to add a drop shadow to the text. Increase the default value of the drop shadow's opacity to 89% to make the text stand out.



Change the Foreground and Background colours. Use the Eyedropper Tool to sample a red and a yellow from the image. Use a Layer palette shortcut to add a gradient overlay to the layer. To edit the gradient click on the Greyscale Gradient bar in the Layer Styles dialog box. The Gradient Preset window will open. Choose the Foreground to Background preset and click OK.

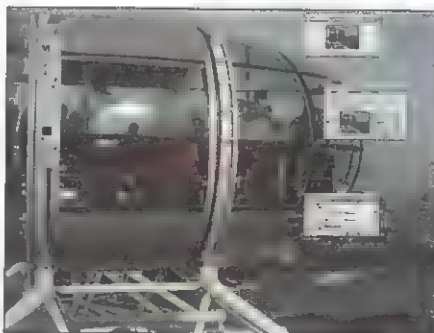


Add as many layer styles to the text as required. Then create a new layer and select the Custom Shape tool [U]. Choose a symbol from the Custom Shape Picker and draw it on the new layer. To give the symbol the same layer style settings that you applied to the text layer, drag the label 'Effects' from the text layer and place it underneath the symbol layer.

Hiding floating palettes

Keep those palettes out of sight but close to hand to keep your workspace clear of clutter

In Chapter one, on page 16, we showed you how to customise the default palette layout to create a workspace tailored to your needs. This helps you to keep the interface nice and clear, so you can get on with your creative work without being distracted by unnecessary floating palettes. While you can usually push open palettes out of the way, this isn't always the case when using certain tools. You might be cutting out a shape with the Polygonal Lasso Tool [L], for example. If part of the object you're



Streamline your workspace so your palettes are hidden, but 'waiting in the wings' for when they're needed. See below for handy shortcuts

trying to select is hidden behind a palette, you won't be able to see what you're doing.



ImageReady

If you're designing web pages in Photoshop you can jump to ImageReady and use the same keyboard shortcuts to show and hide ImageReady's own floating palettes.

SHOWING AND HIDING YOUR PALETTES

A QUICK WAY of hiding all the currently-open floating palettes in the workspace is to hit the [Tab] key. This will hide the both the palettes and the toolbox.

A FLOATING palette can't be moved while a tool such as the Polygonal Lasso Tool is being used to make a selection, forcing you to hit [Escape] to abort the edit. Close any open palettes by clicking on the Close icon at the top of the palette.

ANOTHER WAY to minimise palette clutter is to double-click on the title bar at the top of the palette. This keeps it on-screen, but it takes up far less space. It can be maximised by double-clicking again.

PRESSING [Shift]+[Tab] will enable you to quickly show and hide the floating palettes, while keeping the more commonly-used toolbox on the screen at all times.



Multiple monitors

If your PC supports multiple monitors you can set up your workspace to display the image on one screen and store the palettes on the other, leaving your main work area clear of palettes.

Context-sensitive menus

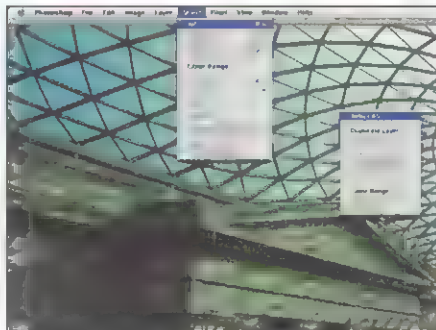
Combine a tool's options and menu settings in one handy pop-up window



Experiment

Context-sensitive menus can be used to edit palettes as well as tools. Right-click in an empty section of the Layers palette to access a pop-up context-sensitive menu. Use it to quickly resize the layer thumbnails. Try right-clicking using a variety of different tools and palettes to see the hidden shortcuts available to you.

Another way of working smarter is to use context-sensitive menus. These pop-up menus have a huge advantage over using the main menu and Options bar to edit a tool's attributes. For starters, they appear on screen exactly where you're working with a particular tool. This saves you a trip to the main menu bar, and allows you to focus on the task at hand without being distracted by unrelated menu options. Context-sensitive menus also combine most of a tool's main menu settings with other options that you'll find in the



Why trudge up to the main menu and interrupt your work when you can use context-sensitive menus anywhere on the screen?

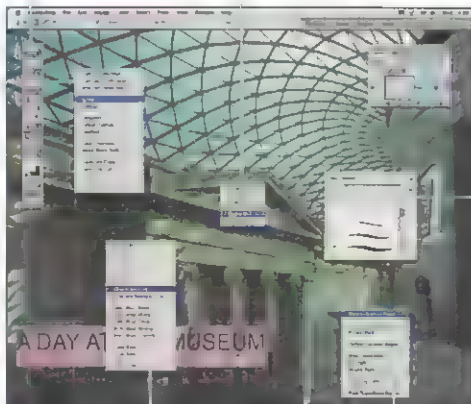
tool's Options bar. This puts almost every option you could want for that tool into one handy pop-up window.

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE MENUS IN ACTION

To access a contextual menu start using a tool, then right-click with the mouse, or [Control]+click on a Mac.

While making a selection with the Magic Wand, use the context-sensitive menu to access the most popular edit options.

Some context menus feature more information than others. The menu for the Text Tool, for example, can't hope to include every text-related option.



The Zoom Tool's context menu let's you access every option without using keyboard shortcuts or the tool's Options bar.

Many brush-based tools, such as the Clone Stamp Tool and the Erase Tool, share the Brush Preset Picker as their context menu.

The Pen Tool's context menu gives you handy access to options such as Delete Anchor Point, so you can quickly modify the path as you create it.

Faster navigation

There's more than one way to move around your image – choose the one that suits you

With most Photoshop operations there are a number of different ways to achieve the same result, and navigating around an image is no different. Some Photoshop users tend not to use the Navigator palette or the Zoom Tool to access various parts of an image; they prefer using keyboard shortcuts to zoom in and out of the image, combined with holding down the [Spacebar] to activate the Hand Tool. However many Photoshop users would be lost without access to the Navigator



The Navigator combines the Zoom Tool with the Hand Tool to give you quick access to any part of an image

palette. The trick is to be aware of all the options, so that you can choose the ones most suited to your work.



To scroll, or not to scroll...

When zoomed-in to an image you can use the horizontal and vertical scroll bars to navigate around the screen, just like you would with a word processing package. However, this means moving the mouse away from the work area to the screen edge. Save time by using the Hand Tool [H] to slide the image around.

NAVIGATION OPTIONS

- **THE NAVIGATOR** palette's slider makes it easy to zoom in and out to precise sizes, with far more control than the incremental steps available when using the Zoom Tool.
- **THE NAVIGATOR** palette overlays a red rectangle on an image thumbnail to indicate which part of the image you're working on in relation to the image as a whole. Drag the rectangle about to re-position the main image.
- **THE ADVANTAGE** of using keyboard shortcuts to zoom in and out is that you can keep hold of the tool you're working with, and don't have to select the Zoom Tool. This will save you lots of time. Press [Control]+[+] to zoom in and [Control]+[-] to zoom out.
- **THE ZOOM TOOL** does have its uses. Double-click on the tool's icon in the toolbox to display the image's actual pixel size.



Alternative options

If you do use the Zoom Tool, speed things up by pressing [Alt] to change it from zoom in to zoom out. Mac users should use the [Option] key.

Faster tool selection

Summon your favourite tools at the touch of a key by making use of shortcuts

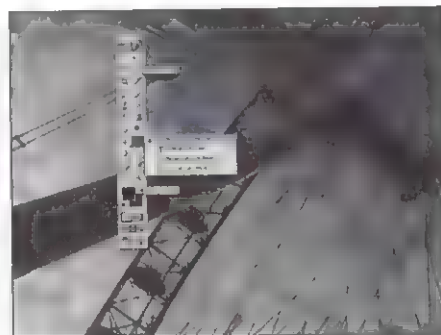


Guess that key

Some tools have a keyboard shortcut which can be guessed easily – the Type tools can be selected by pressing the [T] key. Other tools are not so logically labelled. The Healing Brush, for example, is activated by hitting [J].

As we climb the Photoshop learning curve, we should be spending less time accessing tools by moving the mouse to click on icons. We should also be wasting less time opening menus and sub-menus. Thanks to nifty keyboard shortcuts we should be able to summon up most of the tools we need in an instant.

As well as speeding up our workflow we can also dazzle colleagues with our mastery of Photoshop as we rapidly jump from one tool to another without



All tools in the toolbox can be activated by a keyboard shortcut. Some are more obvious than others, such as [C] for the Crop Tool

interrupting our creative workflow. Let's focus on faster ways to access and activate tools in the toolbox.



Hide Tool Tips

You can disable the Tool Tip option if you find it distracting. Go to Edit > Preferences > General (PC) or Photoshop > Preferences > General (Mac) and un-tick the Show Tool Tips box.

TOP TOOL SHORTCUTS

TO IDENTIFY which key summons which tool, hold the cursor over the tool's icon. A floating Tool Tip will appear above the icon, showing you the tool's name and the relevant activation key.

THE TOOLBOX is organised logically, with navigation tools like the Zoom and Hand tools located side by side, but in a box of their own. The Zoom Tool is activated by pressing [Z]. The Hand Tool's shortcut is [H].

OTHER COMPARTMENTS in the toolbox contain multiple tools. The Brush and Pen tools share a compartment for example. They both share the same keyboard shortcut as well: [B].

TO TOGGLE through all of the tools in one toolbox compartment hold down [Shift] while pressing the relevant shortcut key. For example, holding [Shift] and pressing [E] repeatedly will switch between the three different versions of the Erase Tool.

Terrific templates

Save time by creating editable document templates that you can use again and again

If you regularly use Photoshop to create designs for similar types of work – DVD covers or web pages for example – you can save time by creating a series of pre-designed template Photoshop documents that contain the correct dimensions, layout guides and reusable design elements. This will save you having to recreate new files from scratch.

Let's create a file containing the dimensions of a typical project – we'll use a DVD cover as an example. Go to File > New and select a transparent background



Don't re-invent the wheel! A pre-designed template layout makes time-saving sense, as you can drop new images into existing layouts

(this will save you having to unlock the background layer each time you open and adapt the template).



Template.psd

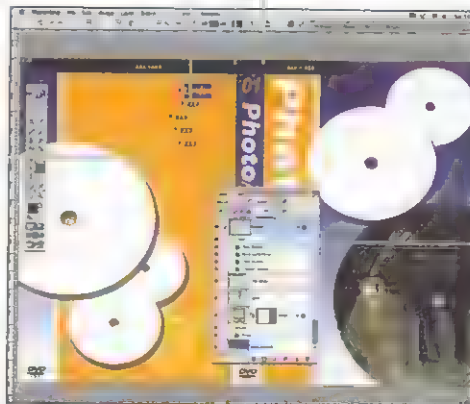
Take a look at our DVD cover template on the CD. Practise customising the template by changing the text and altering the colour of the yellow shape. Paste new images into the white DVD icons.

CREATING A TEMPLATE

To keep the series of DVD covers consistent, type in some holding text. You can quickly edit it while maintaining continuity of font and text position.

It's useful for a template to contain editable elements. The yellow section is a filled rectangle shape, which can be re-coloured by double-clicking on the thumbnail in the Layers palette.

To save you time adding and re-scaling objects, the template should also contain re-occurring elements, like this DVD logo.



Use the rulers and guides we customised on page 13 to indicate where the template's spine should be.

Fine-tune your template by hiding, showing or re-editing existing Layer Styles.

Copy an image, select pre-designed shapes with the Magic Wand, and use File > Paste Into to add new content to customise the template.

Good housekeeping

Getting your Photoshop house in order will help you to streamline your workflow

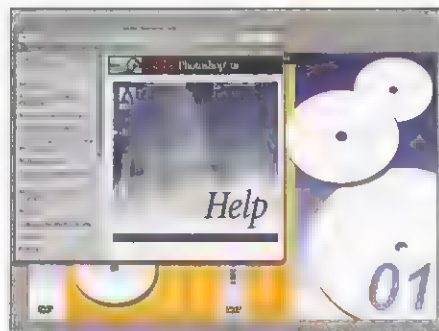


Help yourself

Photoshop comes with extensive HTML-based help files. Go to the main menu bar and choose Help > Photoshop Help. Windows users can summon help by pressing [F1]. Alternatively, find the HTML files in the Photoshop Help directory stored on your hard drive. Open the file help.html. This will open the files in a web browser and offer you the option to search using keywords.

Some people have fastidiously clean houses. There are systems in place for everything from washing up as soon as the meal is over to popping dirty laundry straight into the washing basket. Other people are happy to leave their dishes scattered around the kitchen, and they leave piles of dirty socks lurking under the bed, content in the knowledge that they'll eventually make their own way to the washing machine.

When it comes to working in Photoshop it pays to adopt good working practices and implement



Photoshop's HTML-based help files are full of tips and tricks to help you learn more. Choose Help > Photoshop under the main menu bar

sensible systems to streamline your workflow. Check out the box below for some useful ideas.



Online help

Under the Help menu you'll also find a link to Adobe Online. There are plenty of resources here to help you learn more. Even if you don't register, you can still browse the useful Forum section to pick up handy tips.

TIME-SAVING WORKING PRACTICES

GET INTO the habit of saving your files regularly. Add a numerical suffix to them (Version.01.psd, Version02.psd and so on); this will allow you to retrace your creative steps if things go wrong.

LABEL YOUR layers as soon as you create them. This is the Photoshop equivalent of washing up straight after a meal. Labelled layers save you time when you're searching for specific elements.

STAY WITHIN the Photoshop workspace to speed up your workflow. Use the File Browser to locate images, rather than rummaging around multiple directories.

BACK UP YOUR files regularly. Developing a routine for backing up your files will save you hours if something goes wrong and you have to recreate your work from scratch. Applications like Backup on the Mac can be set to archive specific folders automatically.

Memory management

Are your filters faltering, or your layers lagging behind? Then it's time to free up some RAM

Computer memory is getting bigger, cheaper and faster, but no matter how many megabytes of memory you have, there will still be times when you push Photoshop beyond the limits of your computer's memory. When you copy a selection of pixels, these go into the computer's clipboard and take up memory capacity. As you work, Photoshop is also storing each operation you perform in its memory, so that you can use the History palette to retrace your steps. RAM (see sidebar) is also required

to run other open applications, so the more demands made on your PC's RAM, the more risk you run of impairing Photoshop's functions.

With all the demands made on your PC's finite memory, it's hardly surprising that Photoshop might find cause to complain when asked to perform certain tasks; we've all encountered on-screen messages warning that Photoshop can't perform a particularly demanding filter operation due to lack of memory. But there are some things you can do to lighten the load...



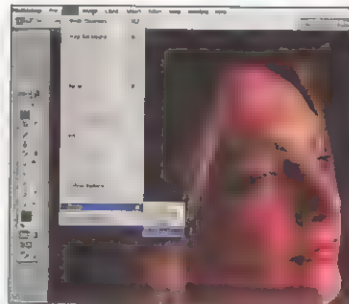
Get enough RAM

There are several different types of Random Access Memory (RAM) available, but they all do the important task of juggling various bytes of information to enable packages such as Photoshop to perform their amazing feats quickly and efficiently. If too many packages are open at once you might run out of RAM and experience a crash.

RAM BUSTERS

There are a few simple things you can do to free up memory

If you get warnings from Photoshop complaining about a lack of memory, it could be that the Clipboard and History states are full. You can choose to either empty the RAM of the stored History states, clear the Clipboard or remove the Undo options. If you don't need access to the last few steps of a project, or no longer require the contents of the Clipboard, then your best bet is to choose Edit > Purge > All. A quicker way of emptying the Clipboard is to use a Marquee tool to select a tiny area from the image and Edit > Copy that into the RAM. This should free-up some more memory and get Photoshop running efficiently.



Use the Edit > Purge command to clear your computer's RAM of any memory-hogging elements

Annotations

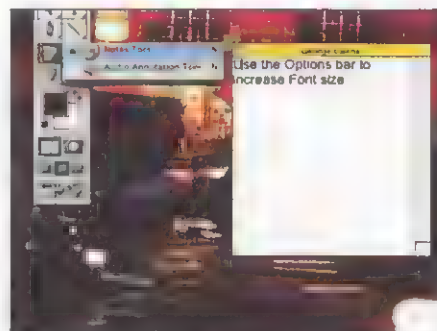
Create non-printing on-screen notes to help other users understand your document



Annotations.tif

Check out this file on the CD to see note and audio annotations in action. Try adding some of your own to the file. Save it as a .tif file to preserve the annotations.

There are some occasions when other people will need to work with your layered Photoshop documents. You might, for example, be sending out a poster to be printed, and want to direct the printer's attention to a hidden layer containing alternative text which you'd like them to activate and print. You could send special instructions via email, or attached as Read Me texts, but these can often get lost or overlooked in today's hectic world of information overload. Fortunately, Photoshop allows you to add both



The Options bar enables you to increase the font size of your on-screen annotations, and specify other attributes

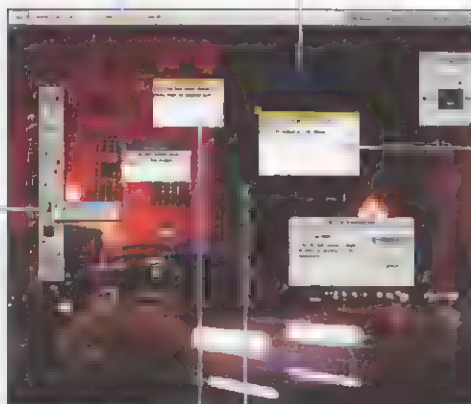
text and audio annotations to the Photoshop document, which will be seen but not printed.

CREATING TEXT AND AUDIO ANNOTATIONS

Use the Options bar to change the name of the note to something more appropriate. You can also colour-code your notes.

Hold the cursor over this compartment in the toolbar to activate the Notes Tool or the Audio Annotation Tool, or press [Shift]+[N].

The annotation's text box can be dragged away from the icon that activates it and repositioned.



To add an Audio Annotation, plug in a microphone and click on the screen to start and stop recording. This will create an icon that will play back your note.

To write a note annotation click anywhere on the screen. A box appears into which you can type.

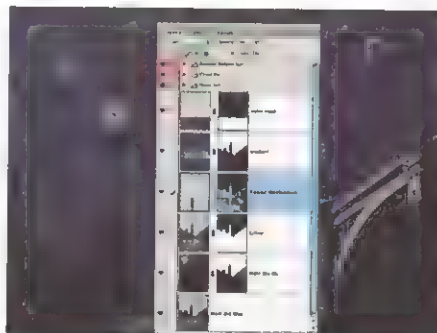
Annotations can be minimised by double-clicking on this Notes icon.

Using layer sets

Streamline and organise your Layers palette by creating sets which you can label

When layers appeared back in Photoshop 2.0, designers wondered how they had ever managed without the ability to separate their work into multiple editable layers. Although we now take layers for granted, are we getting the most from Photoshop's layer management abilities?

Working smarter with layers means labelling them, for starters. This saves us having to scroll up and down the Layers palette, trying to guess where a particular element is stored. While labelling layers will



Layers are powerful tools, but they can create a mess if you don't keep them under control by labelling them and placing them in sets

help streamline our workflow, colour coding and grouping related layers into Sets saves us even more time.



Moving folders

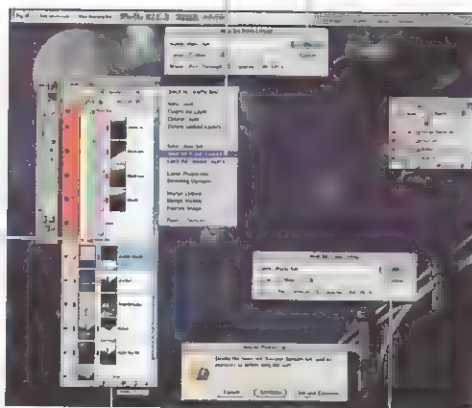
Once you've grouped related layers into organised sets, you can change the hierarchy of large groups of layers by simply dragging the Layer Set folder icons to a new position.

CREATING LAYER SETS

To quickly create a layer set, click on the chain icon to link a group of related layers together. Click on the Layer Palette options icon and choose 'New Set from Linked'.

Layer sets can be opened for editing purposes and then collapsed to show a single folder, saving valuable screen space.

Another way to create a layer set from linked layers is to click on the Create Layer Set folder icon.



When you create a new layer set, label and colour-code it for easier access.

Here's the project's Layers palette in minimised mode. This helps keep the project's 29 layers out of sight, but immediately accessible.

You can easily remove and reorganise layer sets. Right-click on a layer set's icon to delete the set but keep the layers unharmed.

Get integrated

Take advantage of Photoshop's integration with other applications to speed things up

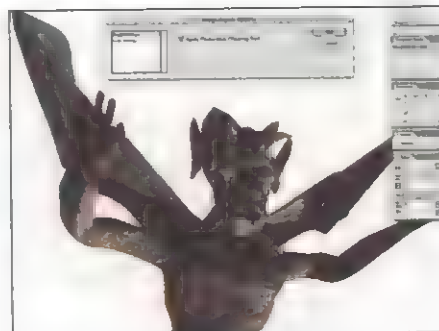


Bridging the divide

Photoshop helps you bridge the divide between Macs and PCs. Platforms that used to fight like cats and dogs will happily exchange Photoshop Documents.

Photoshop is used by people working in a wide range of disciplines and on various platforms. As the industry-standard image editor, it's important that Photoshop can fit into any production pipeline, and the most recent versions facilitate this by integrating smoothly with other applications.

As you would expect, Photoshop is fully integrated with other Adobe products, like InDesign. You can utilise Photoshop's tools to help you work smarter in these packages. For example, you can use alpha channels



You can use a clipping path created in Photoshop to create a fully-editable text wrap shape in InDesign

contained in a Photoshop document to hide image backgrounds, or create texture wraps, in InDesign.



Compatibility

While Photoshop will happily cross the Mac/PC divide, make sure your files can be read on older versions of the software. Go to the File Handling Preference and choose Always Maximise Compatibility for Photoshop (PSD) Files.

WORK SMARTER WITH OTHER APPLICATIONS

MAYA 6 – The latest version of this industry-leading 3D modelling package allows you to export textures from its models straight to Photoshop. You can assign different texture attributes (such as bump and transparency) to different Photoshop layers and modify them in Photoshop. You can bring the layered PSD back into Maya, and apply it to your model.

GoLIVE – Photoshop can help you design entire web pages. Use Photoshop's Slice tool to select which parts of a your design need to link to another page. You can then switch to ImageReady to create links from these slices. Alternatively, use GoLive's Smart Objects feature to generate a site from your Photoshop document.

ILLUSTRATOR – All the vital aspects of Photoshop like layers, masks and transparency information are read quite happily in Illustrator, helping you to combine the strengths of both packages.

Keyboard shortcuts

Become the king of the keyboard by discovering more new shortcuts

On page 42 we looked at how you can take advantage of keyboard shortcuts to rapidly access tools in the toolbox. You can also use keyboard shortcuts to implement a wide variety of other Photoshop menu features. Perhaps you already use [Command]+[C] to copy a selection, rather than using the more time-consuming Edit > Copy option from the main menu.

Try building on your use of simple shortcuts by adding new and more sophisticated ones to your repertoire. Keyboard shortcuts are an important

asset in helping you to speed up your workflow. Indeed, so important is the ability to activate a tool or menu command with a quick flourish of your fingers on the keyboard that the latest version of Photoshop – Photoshop CS – even allows you to customise and create your own keyboard shortcuts for a variety of different tasks. While this level of control is not available to users of Photoshop 7.0, there are still plenty of ways in which you can harness the power of existing keyboard shortcuts.



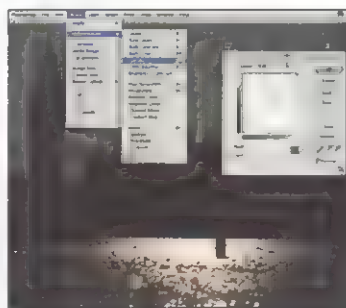
A shortcut a day...

Set yourself the simple target of locating and learning a new keyboard shortcut every day. The next two pages feature a selection of useful keyboard combinations for you to start with. You'll also find some handy keyboard shortcut cards on the backing card for this issue. Stick these to the edges of your monitor screen for quick reference.

LOCATING KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Photoshop is more than happy to give up its secrets

A good place to start hunting down shortcuts is within Photoshop itself. Let the package tell you what combination of keys will activate a favourite menu option. Open the main menu and look at the various commands. Next to each command you'll find a description of any available keyboard shortcut. Another comprehensive list of shortcuts can be found in the Photoshop 7.0 Help files. These break Photoshop down into sections, such as Viewing, Editing and Painting. You'll find lists containing shortcuts for both Mac and PC formats, as there are occasional differences. Mac users call the [Alt] key the [Option] key, for example.



Look next to the menu description of an action to see a description of any available keyboard shortcuts

Killer keyboard shortcuts

Mac users should treat the [Alt] key as the [Option] key and the [Control] key as the [Command] key

IMAGE ADJUSTMENTS

No doubt you'll need to tweak things such as levels and colour values on occasion. These shortcuts will take you to the heart of the Image > Adjustments menu

Adjust Levels	[Control]+[L]
Auto Levels	[Shift]+[Control]+[L]
Auto Contrast	[Alt]+[Shift]+[Control]+[L]
Auto Color	[Shift]+[Control]+[B]
Curves	[Control]+[M]
Color Balance	[Control]+[B]
Hue/Saturation	[Control]+[U]
Desaturate	[Shift]+[Control]+[U]
Invert	[Control]+[I]

SUPER-FAST SELECTIONS

Copy, paste and modify selections more quickly to speed up your workflow

Constrain marquee	[Shift]+drag when first creating selection
Draw marquee from centre point	[Alt]+drag when first creating selection
Select All	[Control]+[A]
Deselect	[Control]+[D]
Add to existing marquee selection	[Shift]+drag
Subtract from existing marquee selection	[Alt]+drag
Hide marquee selection (but keep it active)	[Control]+[H]
Nudge empty marquee selection	Use arrow keys
Nudge empty marquee selection in larger increments	[Shift]+arrow keys
Copy and move selection	Select the Move tool, hold down [Alt] and drag
Fade	[Shift]+[Control]+[F]
Paste Into	[Shift]+[Control]+[V]

FILE MANAGEMENT

Browse, open, close and save your files for a variety of formats, all at the touch of a key – or three

New File	[Control]+[N]
Open File	[Control]+[O]
Open File Browser	[Shift]+[Control]+[O]
Save	[Control]+[S]
Close	[Control]+[W]
Save As	[Shift]+[Control]+[S]
Save for Web	[Alt]+[Shift]+[Control]+[S]
Undo last action	[Control]+[Z]
Step Forward	[Shift]+[Control]+[Z]
Step Backward	[Alt]+[Control]+[Z]
Page Setup	[Shift]+[Control]+[P]
Print	[Alt]+[Control]+[P]
Print with Preview	[Control]+[P]
Print One Copy	[Alt]+[Shift]+[Control]+[P]
Jump to ImageReady	[Shift]+[Control]+[M]

LAYER MANAGEMENT

Who needs to click icons or pull down menus when layer control is just a shortcut away?

Show/hide Layers palette	Press [F7]
New Layer	[Shift]+[Control]+[N]
New Layer (from copy of selected layer)	[Control]+[J]
New Layer (cutting selection from existing layer)	[Shift]+[Control]+[J]
Group with previous layer	[Control]+[G]
Ungroup from previous layer	[Shift]+[Control]+[G]
Merge Down	[Control]+[E]
Merge Visible Layers	[Shift]+[Control]+[E]
To hide non-selected layers	Press [Alt] and click on the layer's show/hide Eye icon
To cycle between layers	[Alt]+[] and [Alt]+[]
To bring a layer in the layers palette forward	[Control]+[]
To send a layer back	[Control]+[]
To jump from the top to the bottom layer in the Layers palette	[Alt]+[Shift]+[]
To bring a layer to the top from any location	[Shift]+[Control]+[]

Chapter 4

GETTING MORE FROM YOUR BRUSHES

With chapter:

- Making your own custom brushes
- Working with the Brush Preset Manager
- Using Smart Layers to create the best of both worlds
- Using the various types of painting brushes
- Creating custom and repeating patterns
- Using the History Brush to undo effects

In Photoshop brushes aren't just used for painting. When used to their full potential they also enable you to create all manner of effects with a minimum of time and effort

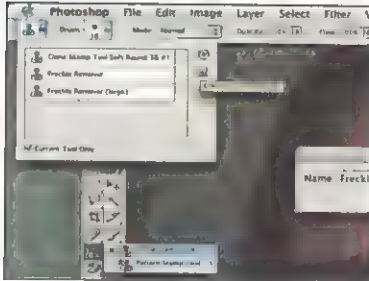
To use Photoshop's brushes simply for painting different coloured pixels on-screen is like driving a fast car in third gear – inefficient, and a huge waste of potential. In this chapter we'll look at how you can put your foot down, and accelerate your brush handling abilities to help you work faster and smarter. Mastering Photoshop's brush-editing options is the key to taking control of a wide variety of tools and techniques.

Brush control

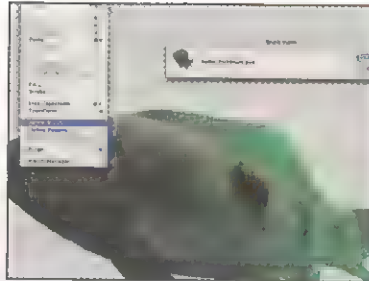
Brushes are the core component of many tools in the toolbox, and confident brush handling is essential

for the effective application of this wide range of tools. For example, the Clone Stamp Tool uses brushes to control the size, softness and opacity of the pixels it's replacing. An ability to skillfully edit these attributes is the secret to faultless image manipulation. Bad brushwork with the Clone Stamp will give away the fact that the tool has been used to hide unwanted image elements. The effectiveness of the Dodge, Burn and Sponge tools is also dependant on how you use the editable attributes in Photoshop's Brush Preset picker.

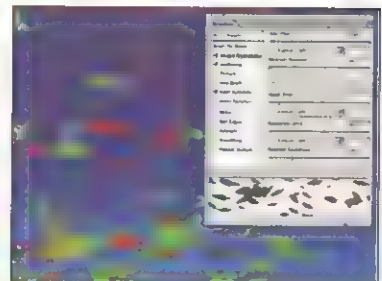
Smarter brushwork means looking at the many ways that Photoshop



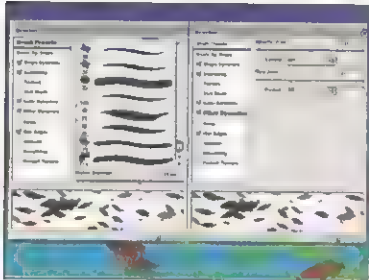
Page 54 Create your own tool presets for a variety of common tasks



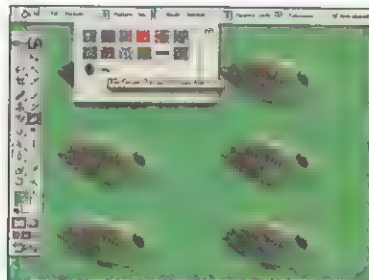
Page 56 Customise your brushes to create unique shaped tips



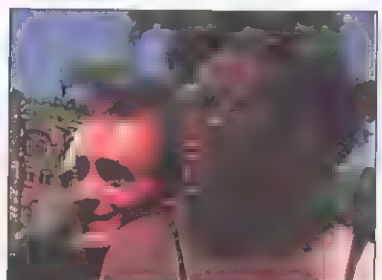
Page 57 Create an entire shoal of fish in one stroke using a Dynamic Brush



Page 58 Edit a brush's dynamic attributes for greater control



Page 61 Create perfect patterns in seconds – use Photoshop's or your own



Page 63 Mix multiple filters together with a few simple brush strokes

provides for creating uniquely-shaped and textured brushes. In this chapter we'll look at how to save valuable time by editing brush attributes in the Brush and Tool Preset pickers to create a library of commonly-used brush types and tool settings. This will give you instant access to tailor-made tools that will meet all your needs.

Different strokes

We'll also explore ways in which you can use the Brushes palette to add dynamically-driven attributes to a brush, and adapt the technique to create a galaxy of stars or a shoal of fish in a few brush strokes. As you'll

see on page 58, dynamics are a useful way of varying brush shapes, and even colours, in a single stroke. Mastering the many ways in which you can use and edit brushes will increase your skill level, and give you access to powerful and creative time-saving techniques. We'll also look at how you can combine brushes, filters and the History palette to apply a unique mix of filtered brushstrokes to a layer, enabling us to create outstanding artistic effects in a surprisingly short space of time. So prepare to be blown away by the sheer power and creative versatility offered by Photoshop's brush-editing tools.

Using tool presets

Avoid having to re-edit the same tools by creating a variety of presets



Lean and mean

To keep the Tool Preset picker clear of clutter tick the Current Tool Only box. Otherwise you'll see a confusing list of the presets created for every other tool, making it hard to locate the relevant tool preset.

Most tools have a variety of editable attributes that appear in the Options bar at the top of the Photoshop interface when the tool is selected. For example, you might need to regularly use the Clone Stamp Tool to tidy up minor blemishes or freckles in portrait shots. Normally this involves taking the time to use the Brush Preset picker in the options bar to edit the brush size and softness values of the Clone Stamp. You might also want to adjust the brush's opacity setting to allow for more subtle image

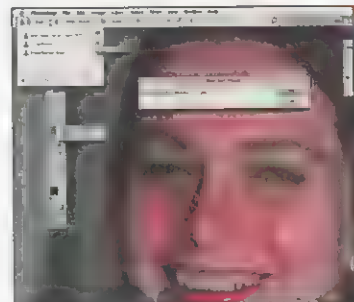
editing. You might need to make several adjustments to these attributes during a particular job.

Instead of having to re-edit the Clone Stamp Tool for different tasks, you can create several different versions of the tool that you can call on when required to do a particular job. Then you can summon the required versions of the tool from the Tool Preset picker without having to waste time re-editing their values. Check out the box below to see how to create a variety of different tool presets.

TOOL PRESETS

Define and store your own versions of commonly-used tools

We'll stick with the Clone Stamp to demonstrate how to create a tool preset, although you can apply the same technique to other tools. Select the Clone Stamp and adjust its brush size, softness and opacity values. You can even change the Mode in the options bar, and this will be incorporated into the preset. Go to the Tool Preset picker at the top-left of the interface. Click on the Create New Preset icon. It will describe the tool in relation to values such as brush size. Label it more sensibly, so you can quickly identify what each preset is designed to do. To access the required version of a tool, simply click on the appropriate preset.



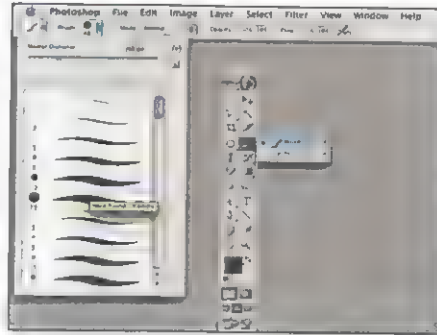
You can create a whole collection of specially-customised Photoshop tools to speed up your workflow

Brush Preset picker

Maximise the potential of the Brush Preset picker to get at your brushes quickly

A wide variety of tools, like the Clone Stamp Tool, use the Brush Preset picker simply to edit the tool's brush size, softness and opacity. Because the Clone Stamp's function is to subtly replace one lot of pixels with another, you don't need its brush tip to be shaped like a rubber duck, for example! However you can use the Brush Preset picker to arm yourself with a variety of creatively-shaped brushes, should your project require them.

Working smarter with the Brush Preset picker means maximising its



The Brush Preset picker can do more than simply change a brush's size and softness. See the annotated screenshot below to find out more

potential. If you haven't yet done so, take a closer look at the contents of the Brush Preset picker below.



Identifying brushes
Hold the cursor over any brush in the Brush Preset picker. A pop-up box will appear, telling you the name of the brush and its diameter. When you create and name your own brushes, their names will appear in a pop-up window too.

THE BRUSH PRESET PICKER

Click here to open the Brush Preset picker. Scroll down to discover the default set of brushes.

Further down the list of default brushes are a variety of unusually-textured brush tips, and even brushes shaped like grass and maple leaves.

Click on the picker's menu icon to access other sets of specialist brushes.

You can use the picker's menu to display a thumbnail of the brush stroke, or set it to show the brush tip and name.

The numerical value indicates the brush's initial diameter in pixels. You can customise this to suit your requirements.

When you select a new set of brushes you can either replace the existing default set or append the new set to the old, so you can use both.

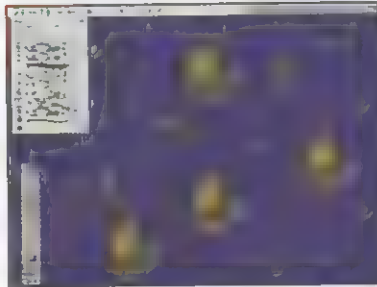
Customising brush shapes

Let's edit a photograph to create our own uniquely-shaped brush

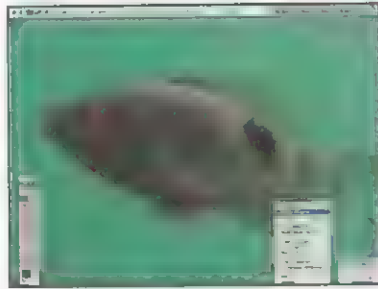


Fish.tif

We'll use this source file on the CD to turn a single fish into a shoal. Photoshop can create any brush shape you like, which can offer a quick way of adding multiple elements to an image.



1 On the last page we discovered that there are some pretty unusual brushes hidden in the Brush Preset picker's menu. While you may never need access to a rubber duck-shaped brush, its presence in the list of Special Effects Brushes does demonstrate the potential for using specifically-designed brush tips in our creative work.

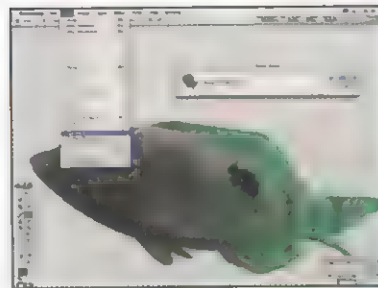


2 Open the file Fish.tif. Double-click on the layer thumbnail to unlock it. Select the Magnetic Lasso Tool and draw an outline around the fish (see page 27 for tips for this tool). With the fish selected, right-click in the selected area and choose Select Inverse from the menu. Hit [Ctrl]+[X] (PC) or [Command]+[X] (Mac) to remove the background. The fish is now set against a transparent background.

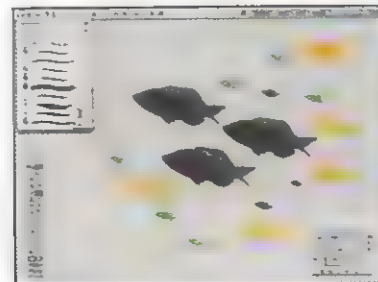


Alternative approaches

On this page we created a brush tip by modifying a photographic source image. You could also define one of the custom shapes as a brush shape, or even use the Pen Tool to draw your own brush tip design.



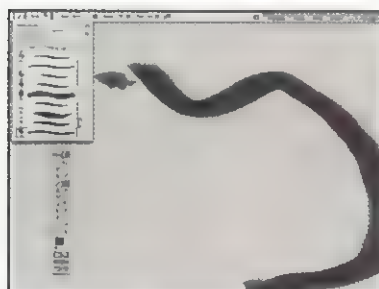
3 Our soon-to-be-fish-shaped brush is a bit big for a brush tip, so use Edit > Transform > Scale to shrink it down (we can always resize it after it has been turned into a brush tip). Go to the main menu and select Edit > Define Brush. Photoshop will use the cut-out fish as the shape for the brush tip. Label your newly-designed brush to help you identify it easily later.



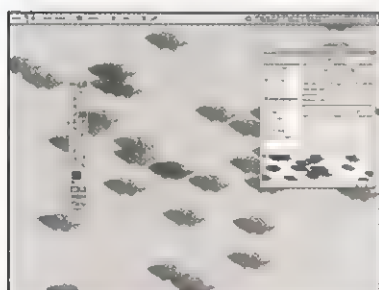
4 Scroll down to the bottom of the Brush Preset picker to locate your new brush. Click once to apply it to the image. It will look a little washed out, so click a couple more times to give the fish more definition. Change the foreground colour to change the colour of the fish and change the brush size for a bit of variety. On the next page we'll look at ways to modify the brush to create a realistic shoal.

Dynamic brushes

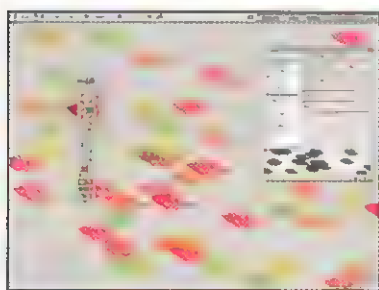
Take control of the Brush Tool's dynamic attributes to create realistic effects fast



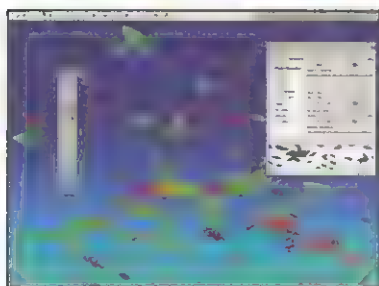
1 The fish-shaped brush we created on the previous page needs a bit more work before it's of real use to us. As you hold down the mouse button and spray the brush on the screen, the fish shapes are bunched too close to each other. They're also the same colour, which gives a less-than-effective result if we want to create a shoal. We need to delve deeper to unleash the Brush Tool's full potential.



2 In the Palette Well you'll find the tab for the Brushes palette. There's also an icon to the left of the Palette Well to toggle open the Brushes palette. In the palette tick the Scattering option. Then click on the word Scattering to edit its attributes. To make the brush spread the fish-shaped tip over a wider area, increase the Scatter slider to 900%. Tick the Both Axes option to spread the fish out.



3 Now let's add some colour. Click on the Foreground and Background colour icons in the toolbox and change them to something a bit more vibrant. Tick the Color Dynamics channel in the Brushes palette and click on the words Color Dynamics to edit the channel's attributes. By increasing the Hue Jitter you can add a multi-coloured shoal to the image with a quick stroke of the brush!



4 The current settings are producing a fairly uniform-looking shoal. We can do much better by activating the Shape Dynamics section of the Brushes palette. Now one quick spray of the brush will create a shoal fish of different shapes, sizes and colours. Using dynamics you can create detailed scenes like this in seconds.



DIY brush tips

Use the techniques shown in this chapter to customise and create a variety of brushes for a whole host of purposes. Swarms of flies and flocks of seagulls are just a few brush strokes away, courtesy of customising shapes and applying dynamics.

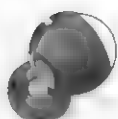


Visual feedback

The great thing about the Brushes palette is that the thumbnail at the bottom gives you instant visual feedback to show you how your attribute editing will affect the brush strokes.

Dynamic duo

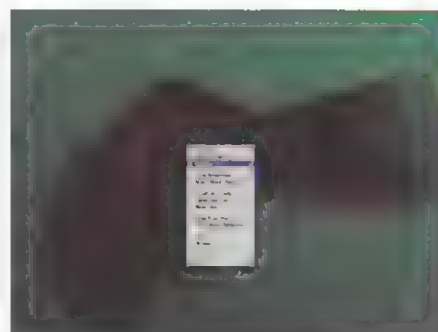
Enhance your brushwork by making use of additional dynamic settings



Fish02.tif

Add more variety to your brush sets by creating another fish-shaped brush. Use the Magnetic Lasso Tool to create another fish out of water. Then you can use the technique on page 56 to define the isolated image as a new brush shape. You can use this new brush to add more variety to your scene.

You've learned how to create a uniquely-shaped brush tip and modify the way the Brush Tool applies the shape to the image to create a large amount of randomly-placed objects. You're now able to modify the Brushes palette to create dozens of different fish from one source image, but even though this image is being randomly scaled, rotated and coloured by the Brushes palette the fish look very similar. Creating another fish-shaped brush from a different source photo will help broaden the mix. Utilising the



Before removing the background from a selected object, feather the selection around the shape to create a soft edge

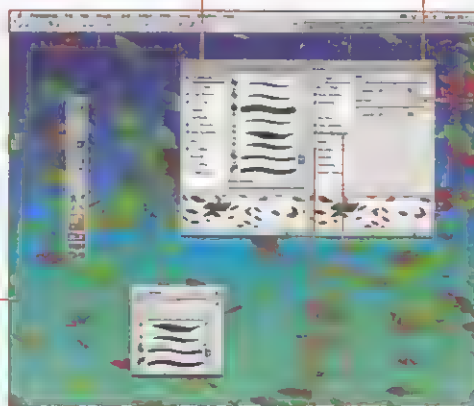
Brush palette's additional dynamic attributes will help add even more variety to your fish-shaped brushes.

ADDITIONAL BRUSH OPTIONS

Clicking here enables you to jump to another brush so you can edit its attributes in the Brushes palette.

Right-click to adjust the size of your edited brush. All the fish in this screen were applied with a three-second stroke.

The Wet Edges option helps give an emphasis to your customised brush stroke, making it stand out from its surrounding environment.



The Opacity Jitter channel in Other Dynamics varies the transparency settings of the brush. This gives the brush stroke extra depth.

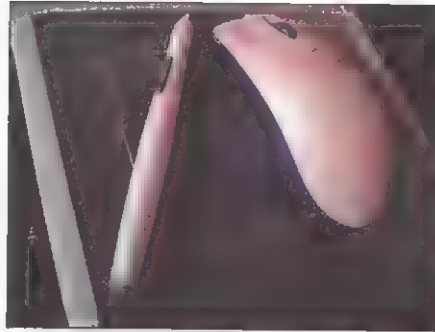
Many of the dynamic settings have a Jitter option. This applies a random value to the attribute it's linked to.

The settings above this line have editable attributes. The ones below can only be turned On or Off, by ticking the relevant boxes.

Enhanced brush control

Fine-tune your brushwork by making use of the Brushes palette's additional control options

So far we've looked at a variety of ways to work smarter – and all have involved using the mouse to control a variety of Photoshop tools. But sticking with the mouse is like driving a car with your feet, and this is especially true when working with brushes. We've looked at ways of adding random settings to your brushwork using the Brush palette's Jitter options. While effective, there are still more ways of increasing your control over a brush's attributes. For more creative control, consider investing in a graphics tablet and



The pen is mightier than the mouse – especially when it comes to acquiring greater control over a brush's editable attributes

stylus. You can then swap between the mouse for general navigation and the stylus for intuitive brush control.



Stylus styles

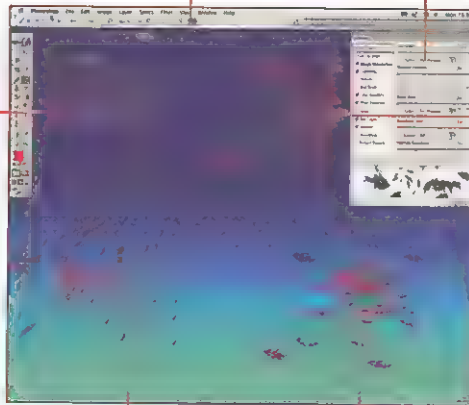
To discover the various types of graphics tablets and styluses available, check out www.wacom.de. Wacom is one of the leading stylus producers. Using a stylus will bring a whole new level of control and interactivity to your Photoshop work.

BRUSH CONTROL OPTIONS

To use a stylus with any Photoshop brush, plug it into your PC and click on the stylus icon in the options bar.

This shoal of fish was created in seconds by using the stylus to control the brush's Size Jitter. The softer the stylus pressure, the smaller the fish (and vice-versa).

This shoal was created by using the stylus to control the Angle Jitter of the fish.



To make your stylus influence your Brush palette attributes, set the relevant attribute's Control option to Pen Pressure.

Here we've applied the stylus to control the Scattering, Size and Angle attributes in one go.

Here we see the result of Pen Pressure being used to control the Scattering setting in the Brushes palette.

Brush tips

Here's a collection of tips and tricks to help you win the battle of the brushes



Save it and share it

Once you've edited a brush by changing its size, tip or dynamic attributes, save your work by clicking on the Create New Preset icon in the Brush Preset picker. You can then use the Preset picker to save the brush in the .abr format, so you can share it with colleagues.

We've looked at a variety of ways to boost the power of the Brush Tool to enhance your creative work. Many of these involve plugging in a stylus to give you intuitive, interactive control over a variety of brush attributes, such as size and opacity. If you don't have access to a stylus and the control it gives you when re-sizing a brush tip, use a keyboard shortcut instead.

When using a mouse to apply your brush, interactively change the brush size by pressing the [bracket to shrink the brush's diameter and the]



If a selected control option is unavailable a triangular warning sign will appear next to that particular control slider

bracket to increase it. Try the tips listed below to further streamline your workflow.



Brushes on the web

We've seen how powerful Photoshop's brush-editing options can be, and you can download and install some excellent free brushes from this website. There's an amazing range of brush tips to explore, from Flowers and Fronds to Celtic symbols: www.photoshop.brushes.btinternet.co.uk

BRUSH SHORTCUTS

- ❑ **WHEN YOU** have the Brush Preset picker selected, use the up and down arrow keys to scroll through the list of brushes available.
- ❑ **TO QUICKLY** edit the softness/hardness values of a brush, hold down [Shift] and use the square bracket keys.
- ❑ **COMBINE** two different brushes to create a completely new brush tip. Go to the Brushes palette and click on the Dual Brush option. You can now add a secondary brush from the Brush Preset picker to influence the primary brush tip.
- ❑ **TO DESIGN** your own calligraphy-style brush tips, go to the Brushes palette and click on the Brush Tip Shape option. You can now interactively compress the circular brush tip's Roundness setting and give it a more elliptical shape. You can also adjust the Angle setting, to make the brush paint at a slant.

Perfect patterns

Here's another way to apply your own designs using Photoshop's pattern creation tools

We've seen how Photoshop enables us to create unique brush shapes by using photographic elements or hand-drawn art as the source for a new brush tip. We've also looked at ways of editing a variety of attributes to control the way in which the brush shapes are applied to the image. These techniques are good for producing randomly-laid-out organic designs, such as the scattered shoals of fish we created a couple of pages back.

However, to create a more ordered design, such as a tiled website

background or a repetitive wallpaper pattern, we're better off calling on the assistance of Photoshop's automatic pattern-making facilities. Photoshop has a variety of preset patterns, and these can be accessed from the Paint Bucket's options bar. As with brushes, we can also create and define our own patterns to add to those that come with Photoshop. Patterns are a close relative of the Brush Tool (indeed, the Define Patterns option is located next to the Define Brush Shape option in the main menu).



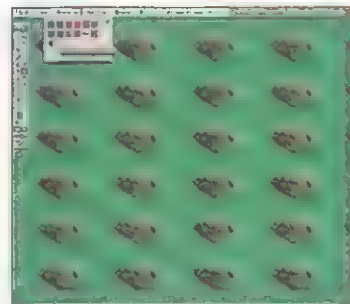
More patterns

As with brushes, you can use the Preset picker to load in a large variety of pattern designs. Access the Pattern picker from the options bar when you have a tool such as the Paint Bucket selected. You can use the picker to load in patterns you've designed and saved in Photoshop's .pat format (or download and use third-party patterns).

CREATING A REPEATING PATTERN

It's simple to produce a pattern from a single object

To create a repeating pattern you first need to design the main component – we'll stick with our fishy theme. Isolate the object that you want to derive the pattern from. Then select the object using the Rectangular Marquee Tool (M). Bear in mind that the space you create around the object with the Marquee will define the distance between the repeating versions of the object; the bigger the border you draw around the shape, the larger the gap will be between the pattern's tiled shapes. Once you've selected your shape, go to Edit > Define Pattern and label your pattern. You can now apply the pattern by going to Edit > Fill > Pattern.



Create wall-to-wall fish in an instant by making use of Photoshop's ability to define and apply patterns

Making history

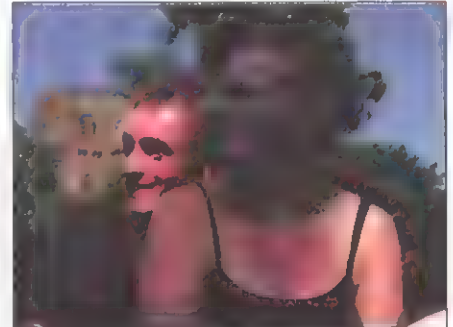
You can mix the best Brush filter effects together using the History Brush



Paint.tif

Use this image to become familiar with the Brush filters before we break out the History Brush tool to pick and mix elements from each filter and apply them artistically to the image.

No chapter on working smarter with brushes would be complete without a look at the Brush Strokes filters. These add a variety of creative brush-stroke effects to your source images, allowing you to fake a variety of painted techniques. The problem with applying Brush Strokes filters to a layer is they give a uniform effect, which is not very convincing. On the next page we'll look at a clever way to work smarter with our brush filters by mixing a variety of different filter-created brush strokes together on one layer.



Slapping on a brush filter is all very well, but the effect is spread evenly across the image. Find out how to mix filters together on the following page

But first let's examine some of the more useful Brush Strokes filters that are available to us.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Angled Strokes (Filter > Brush Strokes > Angled Strokes): A useful filter to create a painted effect while still preserving crucial details. Handy for faces.

Fresco (Filter > Artistic > Fresco): This filter creates a scratchy, dry-brushed texture.

Paint Daubs (Filter > Artistic > Paint Daubs): This filter is excellent for loosely sketching in large areas where fine detail is not required, much as a painter would do.



Palette Knife (Filter > Artistic > Palette Knife): This is another great filter for sketching in large areas in an impressionist style.

Water Color (Filter > Artistic > Water Color): With the right settings this is an extremely attractive filter, as it preserves image detail while adding an effective paint texture.

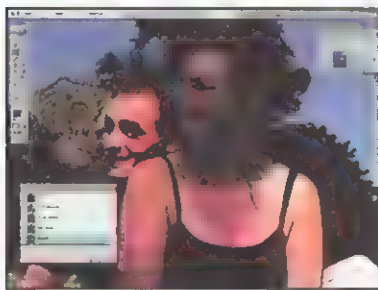
Accented Edges (Filter > Brush Strokes > Accented Edges): This is a handy filter for highlighting a subject's outlines, to make them stand out from the background.

Smarter filters

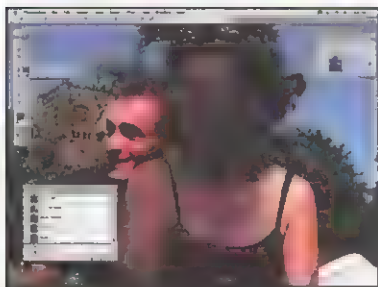
Use the History Brush to mix together the best effects from a variety of Brush Strokes filters



1 Go to Filter > Brush Strokes > Accented Edges. Set Edge Width to 4 and Edge Brightness to 23. Apply the filter, then open the History palette. Click on the Create New Snapshot camera icon at the bottom of the palette. A thumbnail labelled Snapshot 1 will appear. Label this thumbnail Accented Edges. Click on the History thumbnail of the original image to restore it to an unfiltered state.



2 With the photo in its original state go to Filter > Angled Strokes. Repeat the procedure in step 1 to take a new history snapshot of the filter's effect on the image. Label the new snapshot Angled Strokes. Return to the image's original history state and apply a few more filters, creating a labelled history state for each of them.



3 Build up a selection of filter snapshots and click on the unfiltered thumbnail. Go to the toolbox and choose the History Brush [Y]. Click next to the history state of the filter you want to use as a source for the brush and start painting on the main image. You'll be able to paint using the filtered effect. We used the Fresco filter on the church tower and the Angled Strokes filter on the couple's faces.



4 Continue mixing different history states, using the History Brush to apply different effects to various parts of the image. We added a subtle Accented Edge filter to parts of the couple to make them stand out from the background. We used a more impressionist effect when painting the trees by sampling a Paint Daub history snapshot.



Preserving history

Be warned that your history snapshots are not saved when you close a Photoshop Document, so apply the History Brush tool once you've created your history snapshots. Using filters and history snapshots is a very quick technique – we created our finished result in less than 15 minutes.



Mixing paint

We'll apply a variety of different brush-related filters to different sections of the Paint.tif image, and mix them smoothly together to create a more effective painted look. As we're still using filters, this effect can be achieved very quickly.

MAKING THE MOST OF AUTOMATION

Sometimes you can just sit back and let Photoshop do the work for you – take a look at how you can streamline your workflow by taking advantage of automated features

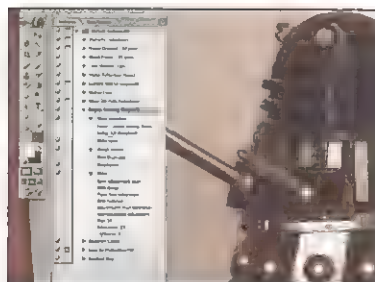
Life's too short to spend hours doing repetitive chores that machines can help you accomplish more quickly. You're more likely to use a vacuum to clean the carpet, as it will enable you to tackle a job that would take far longer with a dustpan and brush. And who's going to wash clothes by hand when they can throw them in the washing machine and use the time more profitably by doing something else?

Take time to save time

When it comes to organising our domestic lives we've got automation sewn up. However, are you making the most of automation when it

comes to your Photoshop work? How many times do we repeat the same procedures in Photoshop, when we're aware that there are tools available that will happily automate the more tedious jobs? The irony is that it seems easier for us to perform the repetitive task we're familiar with there and then, because we think that finding out how to automate the task using an action will take up too much time!

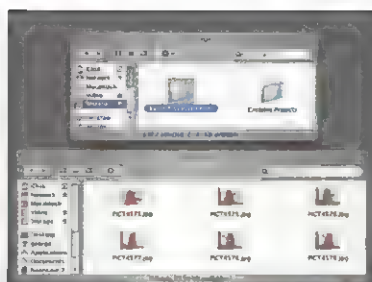
Hopefully this book will give you the kick-start you need to start taking advantage of the automated opportunities Photoshop offers. By investing a little time in mastering these options, you'll save yourself



Page 66 Take the time and tedium out of repetitive tasks by creating Actions



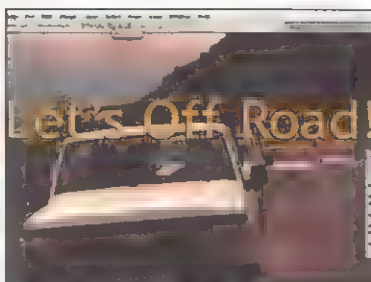
Page 69 Create a Droplet to optimise and resize web images automatically



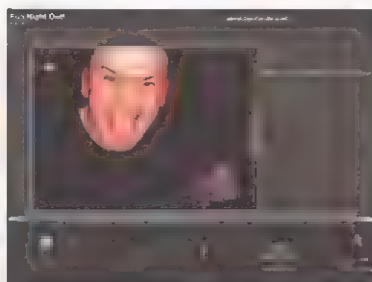
Page 70 Convert a whole folder of files in one go using Batch Processing



Page 72 Knock out a contact sheet in a jiffy with an automated menu option



Page 79 Align layers of text to marquee selections at the click of an icon



Page 81 Whip up a web gallery to quickly share images with friends

hours, and perhaps even days, in the long run. In this chapter we'll look at how to create a multi-step action that will save you time, and will always be available to you. We want you to see how amazing it is that dozens of time-consuming steps can be condensed into a one-click wonder. We'll also see how droplets can save you even more time by creating handy desktop icons that will perform a preset task without you even having to open Photoshop!

Work and play

There are ways to use automation to streamline both your personal and professional workflows. Take the

chore out of getting your holiday snaps online, for example, by using Photoshop's automated Web Gallery Photo function. In your professional work, amaze clients with your fast service by creating contact sheets and picture packages in seconds, using Photoshop's built-in automatic options. Photographers can shave hours off the daily task of image correction by using the Automatic Image Adjustment options lurking in the menu bar. Whatever tasks you use Photoshop for, you can work smarter by exploiting a whole host of automated functions to make your creative and professional life as pain-free as possible.

Introducing actions

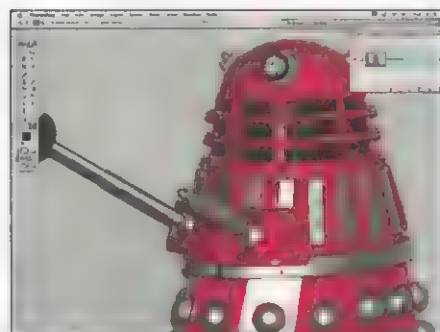
Speed up repetitive jobs by combining a series of steps into one easy-to-implement process



Actions by default

Experiment with the default actions that come with the Photoshop Actions palette by applying them to your images. This will help you to become familiar with how they've been created, and examine how they work when converting your images. You can then create actions to carry out any procedure you like. Some actions can be extremely lengthy and complex.

Much of what we do in Photoshop involves following repetitive procedures to produce work of a certain size, quality and file format. For example, you might regularly post images to online auction sites to help promote the sale of your unwanted items. These sites invariably insist that your image needs to be resized and optimised to fit the online template. It therefore makes good sense to streamline your workflow by turning the long-winded process of resizing, optimising and outputting an image



Here's an unedited image straight from a digital camera. We can use default Sepia Tone settings in the Actions palette to adjust a variety of elements

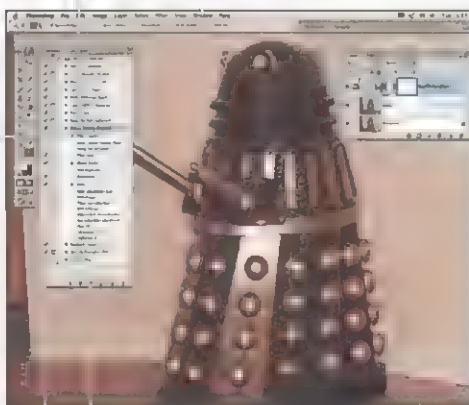
into a single repeatable action. The key to achieving this time-saving automation is the Actions palette.

THE ACTIONS PALETTE

To apply an action select it – it will turn bold. Click on the Play button at the bottom of the palette.

Press the triangle icons to open up the various steps within an Action list to see exactly what settings were used when the action was first created.

Actions (or steps in an action) can be turned on or off using the tick icon. You can also use the trash can to remove actions that you no longer require.



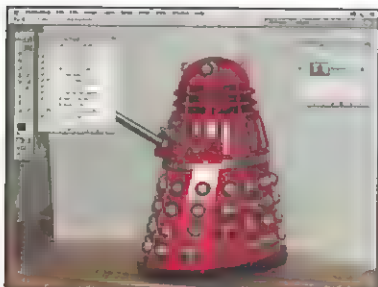
Activate the Actions palette by going to Windows > Actions. You'll see a list of default Photoshop actions for you to experiment with.


Once the action has been applied, you can see any edits or additions to the image in the Layers palette.

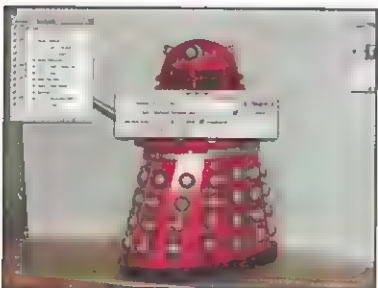
When you hit Play, Photoshop rapidly applies the action's steps to your image one by one. You can see each step being highlighted in the Actions palette as the action progresses.


Action stations!

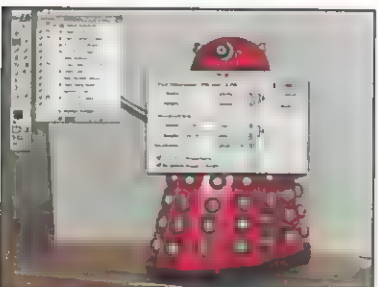
Exterminate those long-winded everyday tasks by using Photoshop's powers of automation




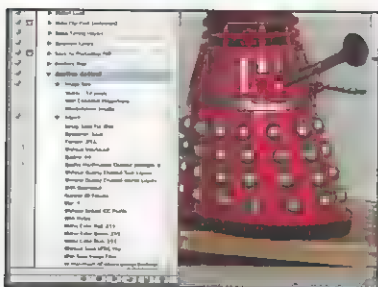
 We've looked at how to apply the default actions in the Actions palette to an image. Now let's create an action of our own, designed to resize multiple source images and optimise them for an online auction site. Open the image Dalek.tif from the CD. At 2592x1944 pixels in resolution, and weighing in at over 14MB, it's far too large for the thumbnail required for the site.




 Go to Windows > Actions to display the Actions palette. Click on the Create New Action icon at the bottom of the palette. Label the action in the dialog box that appears. You can assign commonly-required actions to a function key. If required, include the [Shift], [Control] (PC) or [Command] (Mac) keys in the keyboard shortcut. To help you identify the action in the palette, assign a colour to it.



 Press the Record button. Now every step you take will be recorded in the Actions palette. Don't feel you have to rush; the Action is not recorded in real time, and Photoshop is only recording changes to the image. Go to Image > Image Size and change the width to 150 pixels. Then go to File > Save for Web and create an optimised .jpg. Save the file to a directory and hit the Stop button.



 Your new action will appear at the end of the list in the Actions palette. Test the action by opening a new file and clicking on the action you created. To apply the action to the new file, try the keyboard shortcut you assigned to the action. Alternatively, press the Play button. The new file will be resized, optimised and saved to the same location to which you sent the first optimised file.



Key concern

When assigning a function key to your actions, be careful that it doesn't clash with a commonly-used system shortcut. F11 on a Mac will hide all open windows for example, which is not what you want to happen when you're trying to apply an action that you've created to save time.



Name game

When saving a file during the recording of an action, don't change the file name! If you do, the action will try to rename any new files you apply it to in the future, which will cause it to try and overwrite any files previously created using the action.

Taking automation further

You can do even more with actions, including turning them into droplets



Discipline

Working smarter means having the discipline to break old habits and adopt new working practices. This takes effort in the short term, but it will save you valuable time in the future.

Are you getting excited yet by the thought of all the time you could be saving using actions? You certainly should be! Just think of all the advantages that automation offers. Being freed from the tyranny of time-wasting repetition means more time to concentrate on the more enjoyable and creative aspects of your work.

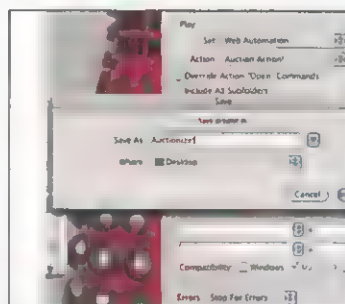
There are many more useful things to discover about Photoshop's automated abilities. For example, you can build on existing actions by selecting them in the Actions palette

and hitting Record. You can even interrupt an action in mid-creation by hitting the [Escape] key, and come back to it later by hitting Record again. You can organise your actions in much the same way as you can your layers by creating sets – just click on the little folder icon in the Actions palette to create a new set of actions. This will help you to organise your actions into sets – for example Web Optimisation or Image Adjustments. And, as we'll see below, you can turn an action into an automated droplet.

DROPLETS

Turn an action into a droplet for increased automation

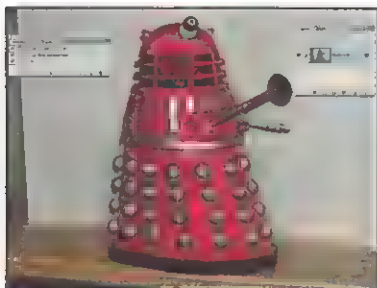
Actions are powerful tools in the battle against repetition, but they're only one half of a dynamic time-saving duo. By combining the automation of actions with the functionality of droplets, we can save even more valuable time. Imagine being able to apply a complex action to a source file without even opening Photoshop first! That's what droplets offer you. There's no need to select an action and hit Play – just drag your files onto a droplet icon sitting happily on your desktop and let the droplet do the rest. How good can it get? Follow the walkthrough on the next page to create a droplet from an action.



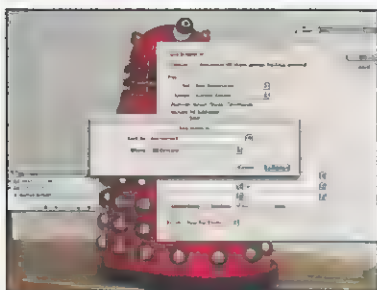
Collapse a complex Photoshop Action into a tiny droplet which can be easily accessed from your desktop

Droplets in action

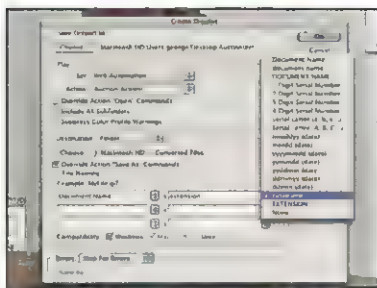
A droplet is like having a genie in a lamp – just drop a file onto it and watch it work its magic!



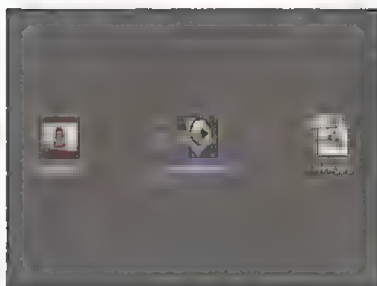
1 To save time, you can create a droplet from an existing action. We'll use the file-optimising action we created on page 67. To tidy up the Actions palette create a new action set by clicking on the folder icon at the bottom of the palette. Label this new set Web Automation. Drag the auction site action you created from its position in the Default Actions set and place it in the new folder.



Select the action you want to convert into a droplet in the Actions palette. Go to the main menu and choose File > Automate > Create Droplet. The Create Droplet settings window will open. Go to the Save Droplet In section and click on the Choose button. Tell Photoshop the name of the droplet and where you'd like to store it. We called ours Auctionize! to describe the droplet's function.



Once you've chosen a location in which to store your droplet's icon, go to Destination and choose a folder for it to place the converted files in. In the file-naming box you can specify a rule that the droplet will follow when naming the files. For example, you can use the pop-up box to make the droplet add a number to each new file it creates. Leave the File Name itself untouched.



Once you're happy with your settings click OK. We chose to place our droplet on the desktop. Locate your new droplet icon, select a large Photoshop file in any format and drag its icon to the droplet. The droplet will open Photoshop if it's closed, apply the desired actions and save the file. We've used a droplet to turn a whopping 14MB .tiff into a web-friendly 8k .jpg in one simple operation.



Save As

If your action contains a Save As command, deselect the Override Action 'Save As' command in the droplet settings window. The web-optimising action we created on page 67 saves every file it converts as a .jpg and places them on the desktop.



Compatibility

You can use the Create Droplets settings window to make sure that the files your droplet converts will be compatible with both Mac and PC operating systems.

Batch processing

Continue mastering automation to help you streamline your workflow even more



New folder

Before converting a whole folder of files using the batch processing option, create a new folder to receive the converted files.

You've discovered that creating an action makes sense – it's like having an unpaid assistant who does all the boring leg-work while you get on with something more creative. Turning an action into a droplet helps you to reduce your workload even further, by collapsing a whole pile of tasks into a simple manoeuvre. Hopefully you're becoming a convert to the power of automating tasks, and want to exploit this wonderful aspect of Photoshop further. So how about converting a whole folder of files from one



Convert an army of large unwieldy files into smaller sizes quickly using Photoshop's automated Batch command

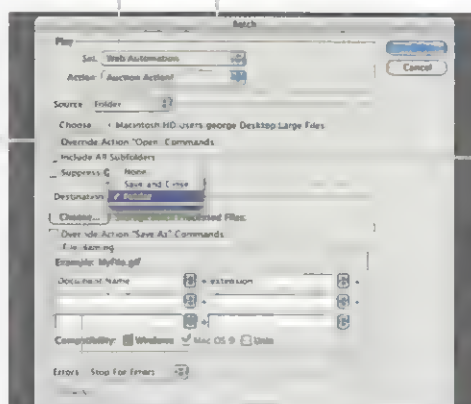
format to another? It sounds too good to be true, but it can be done – go to File > Automate > Batch.

BATCH FILE OPTIONS

Select the set containing the action you want to use when batch-converting a group of files.

Tick the Override Action 'Open' Commands if the action used refers to opening a specific file. You'll want to batch-process any source file, not just the one used to create the original action.

If you want to save the files to a new destination leave this box unticked. Then click OK, and Photoshop will apply the selected action to the files and let you save them to the new location.



Select the desired action from the relevant set. We used the Auctionize! action that we created earlier to batch-process a whole folder of files to go online.

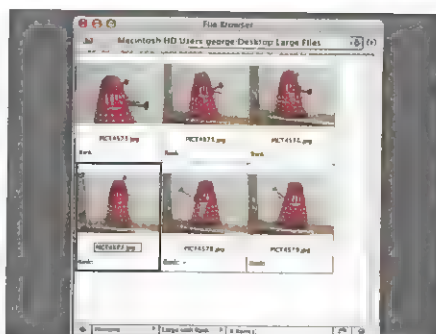
Tick this box if the folder you want to batch-convert contains sub-folders.

Choose the folder or directory you want to batch-process.

More batch processing

You can use the File Browser to batch-process files, as well as to view them

Another way to batch-process files is to change them from within Photoshop itself using the File Browser. The big advantage of using the File Browser is that you can view a thumbnail of each file, and edit certain attributes without having to spend time opening the file. You can also edit groups of files using the File Browser. On page 18 we looked at how you can use the File Browser to add metadata and ranks to images. You can also use the browser to edit the orientation of a batch of images in one go, which



Why bother renaming these image files one by one when you can use the File Browser to rename them all in one go?

can save you a huge amount of time opening, rotating and saving the files individually.



Beautiful browser

You may not have been bothered to use the File Browser before, but it has hidden depths. It does more than simply let you browse your files, as the annotated screenshot below demonstrates.

BATCH PROCESSING WITH THE FILE BROWSER

Rename a whole group of files in a flash. Right-click (PC) or Control-click (Mac) on the selected files, and choose **Batch Rename** from the pop-up option.

If you're renaming a group of files it makes sense to keep the renamed files in the same folder, rather than moving them to another one.

Use the **Batch Rename** dialog window to choose the prefix for all of the selected files.



Another way of accessing the **Batch Rename** command is by clicking on this icon to open the File Browser's palette menu.

Click here to rotate a group of selected files. Photoshop will re-orient the rotated files when it next opens them.

To save the files with an ascending numerical order, choose a two or three-digit serial number.

Contact sheets

Here's a useful automated process that will help you knock out a contact sheet in no time



Un-flatten layers

Photoshop defaults to creating a flattened contact sheet. You can un-tick the Flatten All Layers option if you want the client to be able to isolate specific images and move them about or copy them.

Contact sheets are traditional tools used by photographers to display the results of a photo-shoot to clients. Basically they're the printed equivalent of Photoshop's File Browser, as they display a series of thumbnails with a corresponding negative number. The client can then decide which images they want to have printed. Creating a contact sheet in the traditional way involves mixing some smelly chemicals together, placing your negatives in strips, and exposing them onto an 8x10 inch sheet of photographic

paper. Luckily, there's a much easier way for the digital photographer to create a contact sheet. Yes, you've guessed it – automation.

Producing a contact sheet in Photoshop could take you quite a while. You would have to open, copy and paste multiple images into a file, place them on a separate layer, scale them down to size and then position and label them. But, as we're all now fans of working smarter, why go 'around the houses' when Photoshop can create a contact sheet in a few seconds? Read on!

QUICK CONTACT SHEETS

Make use of automation to do the job in seconds

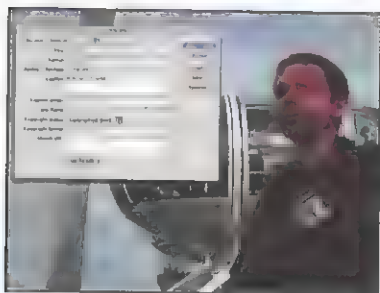
To create a contact sheet using Photoshop's automated option, place the images you want to include in a folder of their own. The contact sheet will use the file names assigned to each of the images to label them, so you might want to use the Batch Rename option in the File Browser to label them more descriptively. Go to File > Automate > Contact Sheet II. In the Settings window's Source Folder section select Browse (PC) or Choose (Mac) to select the location of the images. Set up the document's dimensions (it defaults to 8x10 inches) and select the amount of rows and columns you require. Click OK and Photoshop will go to work.




To get better quality prints from your contact sheet, increase the resolution from the default 72dpi to about 150dpi

Perfect picture packages

Photoshop's Picture Package option can be customised to create a variety of layouts

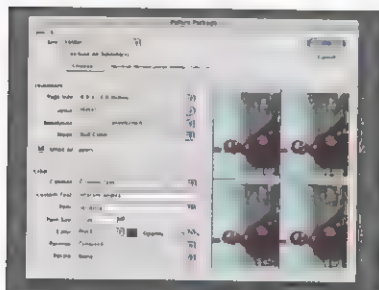



 Picture packages are used to present a client with a variety of different-sized versions of an image on one sheet of paper. Alternatively you might give them a variety of different image versions from the same shoot. Photoshop's Picture Package command can also add captions derived from a file's metadata. To add metadata to a file go to File > File Info and add captions or information.

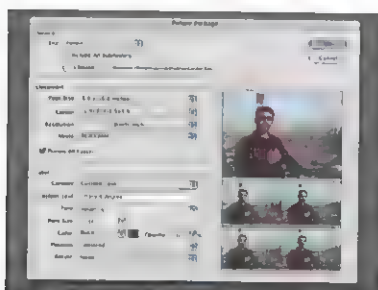



Flat or layered?

You can use the Picture Package settings window to combine the selected images into flattened or layered files. A layered picture package will make it easier for a client to isolate their favourite images.



 Place the images you want to appear in the picture package in a folder. Go to File > Automate > Picture Package. In the Source section of the settings window select Use File for a single image, or Use Folder for multiple shots. Select Browse (PC) or Choose (Mac) to locate the relevant file or folder. Photoshop selects the first numbered file in the selected folder and displays it in the preview window.



 Now you can customise the layout. The layout in the last step was set to (4) 4x5, which means four pictures displayed at a size of 4x5 inches. Pull down the layout menu and change it to suit your needs. As our example folder had five images in it we changed the layout to create one image at 5x7 inches and another four at 2.5x3.5 inches.



Pick and choose

Instead of selecting a folder to convert to a picture package, you can set the Picture Package automation settings to use a currently-open document. When you're happy with your Picture Package preview, click OK. Sit back, relax and watch Photoshop go to work as it opens, rotates and resizes the source images to fit your desired layout.



 Initially Photoshop will place identical images in the Picture Package preview window. Click on the images to customise them. You then have the opportunity to load in a new image from the selected folder. Set the dpi to a higher resolution, so that the client can print the images at a decent quality. You can also choose to display the filename on the images.

PDF to PSD

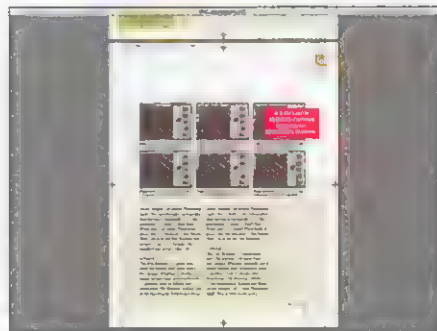
Share images easily by automatically converting and importing PDFs into Photoshop



Rasterize

When you import graphics from another package into Photoshop, they must be converted into pixel-based bitmaps. This is called rasterization. The text and image layout in a PDF need to be converted to a layer of pixels when being imported into Photoshop.

PDF (Portable Document Format) is an extremely useful cross-platform format that allows other people easy access to your files. For example, students using Adobe InDesign to create newspaper layouts can save their work as a PDF and send it to a printer. The printer won't need access to InDesign to open the PDF, as the format is fairly universal. PDF is also compatible with Adobe Illustrator and, of course, Adobe Acrobat. You can save your Photoshop files in the PDF Format, and you can use the Automate menu



Here's a file from a multi-page PDF format. We can import a page (or a range of pages) into Photoshop as rasterized layers

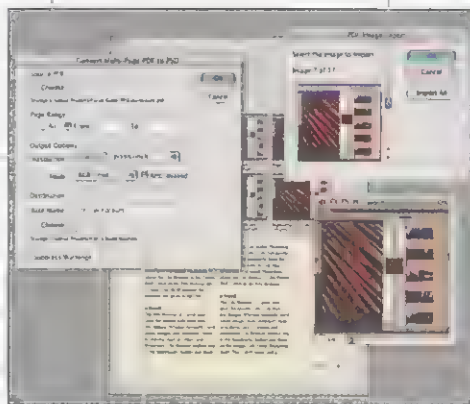
to import existing multi-page PDFs into Photoshop and place them on separate, editable Photoshop layers.

IMPORTING AND EDITING PDFs

Go to **File > Automate > Multi-page PDF to PSD**. This opens a dialog box in which you can choose the PDF file you want to import.

To increase the quality of the PDF once it's in Photoshop, increase the pixels per inch resolution from the default 72dpi setting.

Make sure the Mode is set to RGB if you want to maintain full colour.



To import individual images from PDF to Photoshop go to **File > Import > PDF Image**. Scroll through the list of images in the PDF file to select the ones you need.

Here's one page from the PDF file as a rasterized Photoshop layer. You can see the transparent aspects of the layer.

Tick the **Anti-aliasing** box. This will help to smooth the edges of the PDF text and images as they become rasterized.

Sharing actions

Have you created some amazing, time-saving actions? Share them with your colleagues...

Any actions that you've created to produce a time-saving result can be saved, and shared with other Photoshop users. You can also load in third-party actions to take advantage of the skills of others. Select the action that you want to export – we'll use the Auctionize! action we created earlier as an example. Go to the Action palette menu and select the Save Action option. Label the action, and save it in the Photoshop Actions folder. You can also use the Actions palette menu to import third-party actions

that you've downloaded from the internet. However, before you trawl the web for new actions, make sure that you've discovered all of the amazing actions hidden within Photoshop. The default actions that appear in the Actions palette are just the tip of the iceberg. Go to the palette's menu and select a new set of actions. The Image Effects set contains a useful Aged Photo action. This action contains so many steps and techniques that it took 11 seconds to apply to our sample shot in the boxout below.



All in the name

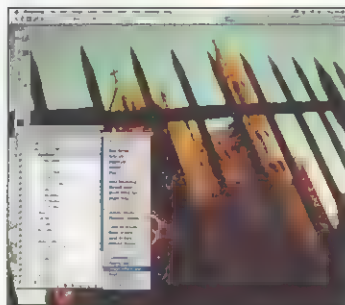
When you export one of your actions for use by other people, feel free to give it a descriptive or creative name.

However, make sure that you keep the .atn suffix at the end of the file name, so that other copies of Photoshop will recognise the file as an action.

THIRD-PARTY ACTIONS

Save time by importing other people's actions and automations

You are not alone. There's a world full of Photoshop users out there, and one way of working smarter is by harnessing this huge creative resource. Think of the thousands of combined hours other users have spent experimenting with different Photoshop techniques to create actions you can apply in seconds. The web is full of people willing to share their labours – some want a fee, but many others are happy to make their actions available for free. A web search will give you access to a variety of actions, but one of the best sites is www.actionaddiction.com. You can even see a handy thumbnail demonstrating the effect each action will apply.



The complex Aged Photo action from the Image Effects set is being applied to this image

www.actionaddiction.com

Auto Levels

Horried by histograms? Let Auto Levels take control of your image adjustments



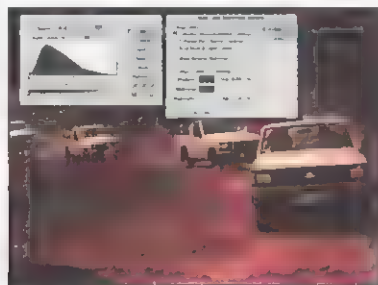
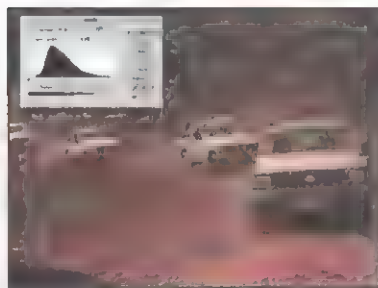
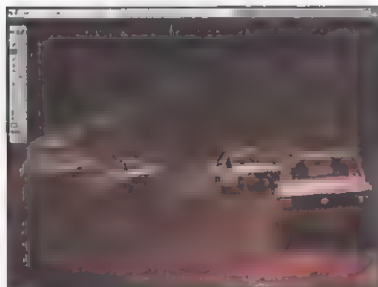
Levels.jpg

Use the sample file on the CD to practise improving the image's washed-out look with the Auto Levels command. There isn't much range between the shadows and highlights. The swirling brown dust in the image helps to add to the diffused look.



Colour casts

Auto Levels turns our warm-looking source image a little cooler by introducing a blue colour cast. But be aware that Auto Levels can create unwanted colour adjustments. Check out step 3 to solve this problem.



Photoshop offers a daunting array of image adjustment possibilities, but fortunately the automation options extend to adjusting a variety of settings. This means that a quick fix for many common image problems is never far away. Take this shot, which was taken on 35mm film and scanned into the computer. The image's black and white levels are washed out, giving it a flat tone.



Let's apply the Auto Levels command to our shot. Go to Image > Adjustments > Auto Levels. Instantly you can see an improvement. The highlights are brighter and the shadows are darker, increasing the range between the two. However as Auto Levels works by altering individual colour channels it can alter the colour balance of the shot. Our image is now a little too cool.



Let's take a look at what the Auto Levels command is controlling 'behind the scenes'. Go to Image > Adjustments > Levels to open the Levels dialog box. You can now see a histogram with sliders underneath. Think of these sliders as a see-saw. On the far right you have the highlights, on the far left you have the shadows. The slider in the middle can be moved to make the levels brighter or darker.

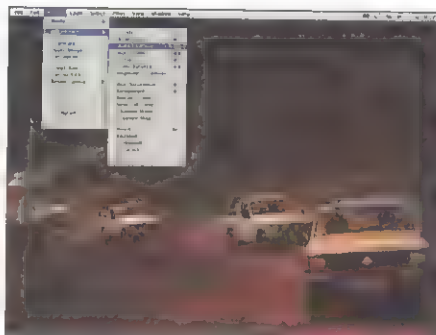


You can customise Auto Level settings. Open the Levels dialog box and click on Options – now you can fine-tune how Auto Levels behaves. To preserve the image's colour balance, click the Enhance Automatic Contrast setting in the Algorithms section. This causes the Auto Levels command to adjust the colour channels identically, preserving their colour while increasing contrast.

Auto image control

Get to grips with the other automated image enhancers to quickly brighten up your shots

Photoshop has a whole arsenal of automatic adjustment options to help you improve the quality of your images. The Auto Contrast option (Image > Adjustments > Auto Contrast) is a close relation of the Auto Levels command. Unlike Auto Levels, Auto Contrast adjusts the image as a whole, rather than tweaking individual colour channels. This means that when using Auto Contrast you don't have to worry about the unwanted colour casts that Auto Levels can give you. The Auto Color command doesn't bother with



On the previous page we used Auto Levels to quickly improve this washed-out shot, but there are other quick ways to overhaul its pixels

histograms – it adjusts the colour and contrast of an image by looking at the actual range of pixels.



Histograms

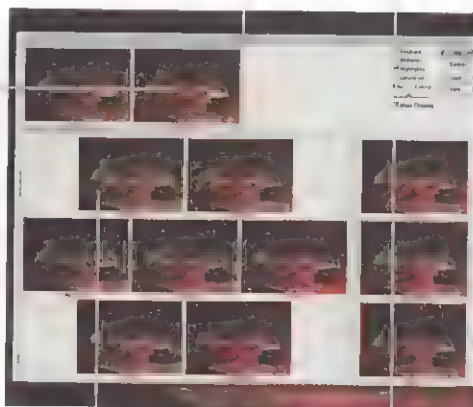
Using the auto image adjustment options means you can stay clear of complex histograms. However, a histogram can be useful, as it gives you a quick indication of an image's tonal range. A well-rounded image has a histogram showing detail in the shadow, mid-tone and highlight sections of the graph. Unbalanced images are indicated by the graph being concentrated in one area.

THE VARIATIONS WINDOW

Another quick way to improve an image's colour and contrast values is by using the Variations command (Image > Adjustments > Variations).

Variations gives you instant visual feedback by showing you alternative versions of the image in a variety of thumbnails.

Click on the thumbnails to change the current pick. This allows incremental changes to various aspects of an image's colour balance and saturation.



Click here to adjust different aspects of the image. None of the changes will take effect until you click OK, so feel free to experiment.

Use this slider to specify the amount of adjustment made with each click. Fine makes slow and subtle changes, while Coarse does the opposite.

Click here to see a neon-style preview of which parts of the image will be clipped. Clipped pixels will show up as pure white or pure black in the final image.

Auto selection

Save yourself more time by making use of the Auto Select Layer option



Bounding box

When you activate the Auto Select option for the Move Tool, turn on the Bounding Box option. This will quickly enable you to check you've selected the correct layer, as a dotted rectangular box will appear around the chosen layer's content.

Working smarter in Photoshop means being willing to try out new ways of working with tools that you may have been using in a certain way for years. This might mean breaking some old habits, but the time saved should be well worth the effort of trying a new approach with a familiar tool. One of Photoshop's great strengths is its ability to store content in layers, and you might be quite comfortable selecting layers by clicking on the relevant thumbnail in the Layers palette. But this is actually quite a

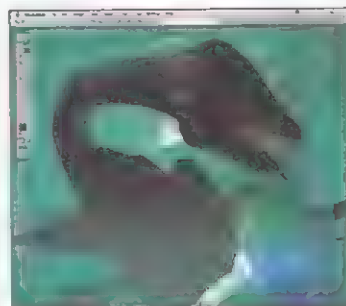
slow way of accessing layer content, especially in a multi-layered file that has some layers hidden away in layer sets. You can spend a great deal of time scrolling up and down the Layers palette to find the layer you need, especially if you have to open up any minimised layer sets.

While we've included some keyboard shortcuts to help you jump from one layer to another active layer (see page 51), there's a faster and more intuitive way to select layer content in an instant, without even having the Layers palette open.

QUICK LAYER SELECTION

Activate the Move Tool's Auto Select option for fast layer editing

To quickly activate any of the many layers in an image, press [V] to activate the Move Tool. Go to the tool's options bar and tick Auto Select. Now you can click on any element in the main image. Photoshop will work out what layer the selected pixels belong to, and will automatically activate that layer. In this example we can click on the bubbles coming out of the beast's mouth to select and move them. The bubbles on the fin can be selected and edited in the same way. The image has 20 layers, but as we no longer need to see the Layers palette to activate and edit a layer we can keep the screen free of clutter.



The Move Tool's Auto Select option enables us to access any layer's components in an instant

Auto Alignment

More time-saving tricks, this time using the Auto Alignment options



When positioning text or other elements take advantage of Photoshop's Auto Alignment options. Hit [Control]+[R] (PC) or [Command]+[R] (Mac) to activate the rulers, then drag guidelines from the rulers onto the image. If you select a text layer using the Move Tool and drag it to a guide, it will snap to the guide when it gets close – this is a quick way of aligning text layers to a straight line.



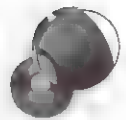
Make a selection using the Rectangular Marquee Tool that surrounds the main jeep in the image. Now select the 'Let's Off Road!' text layer. Notice the icons to the right of the Move Tool's options bar. These allow you to align a selected layer in a variety of ways. Click on the Align Horizontal Centers icon and the text will become perfectly balanced as it overlaps the selected marquee.



With the 'Let's Off Road!' text layer selected, click on the Align Top Edges icon in the options bar. This will place the top edge of the text adjacent to the top of the marquee selection. Select the 'Jeep Safari Style' text and click the Align Horizontal Centers icon. Click the Align Bottom Edges icon and the text should look nicely balanced around the jeep, as shown here.



A quicker way of aligning multiple layers is to link them in the Layers palette with the chain icon. In this example we linked the two text layers and clicked on the Align Left Edges icon to move them at the same time. We then unlinked the layers so they wouldn't overlap each other, and aligned the top text to the top edge of the selection and the bottom text to the bottom edge of the selection.



Jeep.tif

We've provided the image used to generate our walkthrough screenshots on the CD. It also contains a couple of text layers, so you can practise using Photoshop's handy Auto Alignment options.



Handy labels

If you're unsure what an icon refers to, hold the cursor over it for a second or two and a label will tell you its function. If these labels get in the way, or become distracting, you can always turn them off in the Preferences menu.

Creating a web gallery

Get your work online with the minimum of fuss using the automated gallery commands



Relative links

When choosing a location for Photoshop to place all the .html files that it will generate to create your online gallery, make sure they go into a specific folder. You must then be careful to keep everything in the same folder, as the links between the files are relative. If you move any files outside the folders they were created in, there will be lots of broken links.

Gone are the days of dusting off a photo album once in a blue moon to relive all those happy memories of family holidays, weddings and other special occasions. Perhaps your old snaps never even made it into a photo album, and are piled in shoebox in a cupboard somewhere. And if you've taken the step of going digital then you'll no doubt be experiencing the problems which come with having even more images to share.

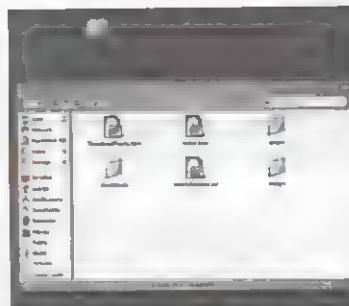
Thanks largely to the absence of developing costs and the

convenience of instant access to our images, we're now more likely to photograph all sorts of occasions, from a trip to the zoo to a night in the pub, and this is where Photoshop's automated abilities can once again be put to good use. We can pop out to a party, take some embarrassing pictures with our digital camera and have them online before our drunken subjects have finishing nursing their hangovers! A quick email to your friends, and you can all have a laugh at each other's expense by going online.

PHOTOSHOP GALLERIES

All you have to do is provide the pictures, then sit back...

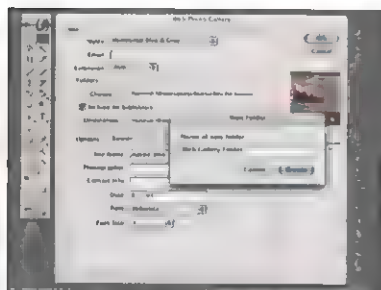
Photoshop has a variety of templates which you can use to present your pictures to the wider world, from a Contact Sheet-style table to a range of different frame layouts. One of the great things about using this feature is that once you've chosen the template and tweaked the look of the layout, Photoshop will generate all the .html files for you. It will also automatically generate thumbnails of your images, and place the text and images into separate folders. All you need to do then is upload the automatically-created content to some free web space, and inform all your friends of the relevant web address.



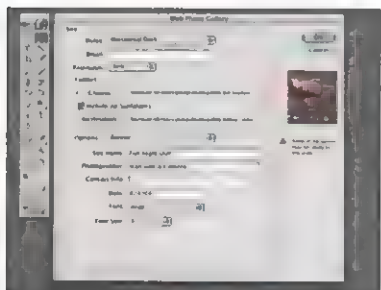
Photoshop automatically takes your pictures and generates the relevant .html files for your online gallery

Instant gallery

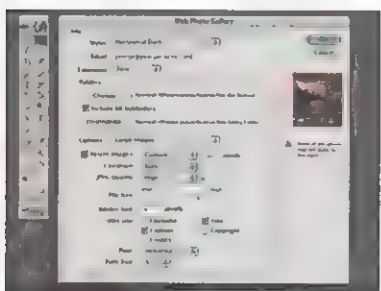
Create an online gallery in minutes by following this simple automated process



Place the images you want to put online in a folder. Open Photoshop and go to **File > Automate > Web Photo Gallery**. The Web Photo Gallery settings window will appear. Go to **Browse (PC)** or **Choose (Mac)** and locate the folder of source images. Choose a destination for Photoshop to place all the .html files and images it's going to create. It's a good idea to create a new folder just for this procedure.



In the **Site** section of the window look at the **Styles** option. This gives you access to a variety of templates in the Photoshop Presets folder. A thumbnail will appear on the right to give you an idea of the colour scheme and layout of each template. Choose the desired extension. The **Options** section starts with information on the site's banner. Change the site name to something appropriate.



Change the **Options** pop-up menu to **Display Large Images**. Here you can define details such as the size of the main images, their quality and whether you want them to have a border. Photoshop will use metadata attached to the source images to generate titles or captions for your site (to add metadata using the File Browser see page 18). You can even create an email link for feedback.



When you're happy with your settings click **OK** and Photoshop will get to work. It will open the source files, generate thumbnails and create the appropriate .html pages. It will then open your web browser to show you the site in all its glory. If you've opted for Photoshop to add an email link, click on this and it will launch your mail package.



Publishing

While Photoshop will generate all the files you need to create an interactive website, you still need to buy web space from a service provider, and upload your files so that they can be accessed online. Some ISPs provide free web space for their customers, so it's worth talking to your service provider before getting out your credit card.



Tweaking .html

If you have access to an .html editor like Adobe GoLive, you can open up the template files generated by Photoshop and fine-tune elements such as font and background colour. However, as this chapter is about automation, you might as well stick to what Photoshop can create in minutes to get your content online with the minimum of fuss.

Chapter 6

GET CREATIVE WITH THE GRADIENT TOOL

In this chapter...

- ☐ Find out when to use different gradient types
- ☐ Learn how to customise gradients
- ☐ Create a realistic rainbow easily
- ☐ Unleash an amazing aurora effect
- ☐ Refine layers using gradients on masks
- ☐ Go psychedelic, gradient style

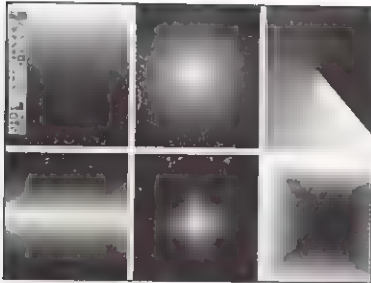
Delve deeper into the creative power of the Gradient Tool. It's not just there to create background colour washes – it can be used to produce some marvellous visual effects

As we've seen throughout this book, working smarter often relates to working faster. We've looked at lots of different ways in which we can manage our projects more efficiently, so that we can find what we want when we want it – placing dozens of unlabeled layers into organised, colour-coded sets for example. We've also looked at ways to work faster by utilising Photoshop's advanced automation tools. These tools can save us from the unnecessary repetition of tedious tasks, freeing up our valuable time to do more interesting and creative work. Some of the creative resources available to us

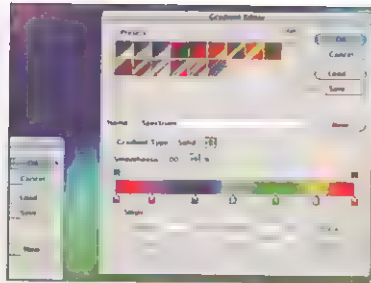
come from surprising sources. Look at the humble Gradient Tool for example – surely it doesn't deserve a whole chapter to itself?

Beneath the surface

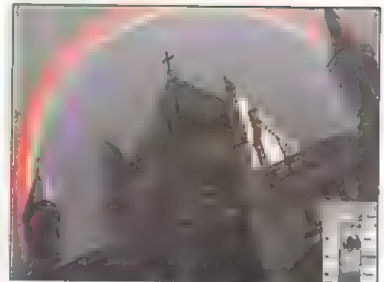
Working smarter is also about digging beneath the surface, and learning more about tools that might initially appear to be fairly limited. In this chapter we'll take an in-depth look at the Gradient Tool, and unleash its potential as a useful creative asset. The Gradient Tool is becoming fashionable in design circles as, when used carefully, it can quickly add texture and variety to large sections of page space. Indeed,



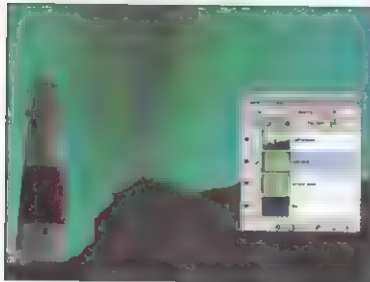
Page 84 Go gradient-spotting with the help of our handy guide



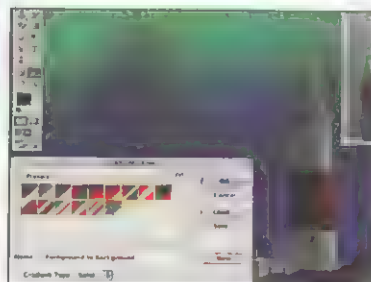
Page 85 Pull out all the stops to customise existing gradients



Page 86 Control the elements, and put a rainbow in your shots



Page 87 Create a spectacular aurora effect using the Gradient Tool



Page 88 Fine-tune your layer masks by adding a gradient



Page 89 Set your sights on being more creative using gradient maps

the Gradient Tool is in danger of becoming the new Lens Flare.

Fashion victim

In the 1990s, fledgling designers were blown away by Photoshop's Lens Flare filter and its ability to fill huge chunks of page space with an attractive, colourful glow. At one stage it was almost obligatory to slap a Lens Flare onto any image. Like any new, technology-generated effect, lens flare became so over-used that it soon became dated. The problem with Lens Flare was that it was easy to apply, and produced instant and dramatic results. This meant that everyone used it, and it

quickly became an over-familiar component of much design work.

The Gradient Tool does a similar job to the Lens Flare filter, quickly filling large areas of space. However, unlike the showy Lens Flare, the Gradient Tool is more subtle, and you have greater control over the look and texture of the gradients the tool can create. Because you need to put in a fair bit of work with the Gradient Tool to get a decent effect it doesn't offer the instant gratification of the Lens Flare filter. As a result it hasn't become as ubiquitous in the design world, and is still in fashion. So let's get to grips with its hidden powers.

Gradient types

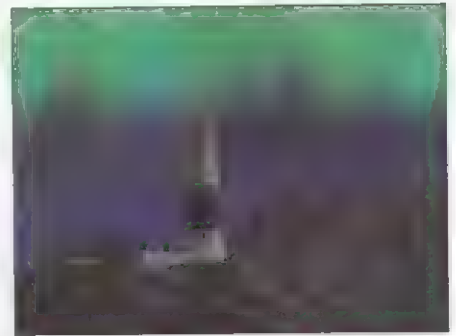
Before you can get the most out of the Gradient Tool you need to know your gradients



Back to basics

Have a play with the various Gradient Tool style options so you're familiar with the basics. Then we can progress to some more advanced gradient editing to get more creative results.

The Gradient Tool [G] shares the same section of the toolbox as the Paint Bucket Tool. Both tools can quickly fill an entire Photoshop document with a texture or pattern, but that's where the similarity ends. The Gradient Tool has a much wider repertoire. Let's start by looking at the different styles that are available. Select the tool and look in the options bar; you'll see a series of tiny thumbnail icons previewing the different gradients that the tool can draw. The most commonly-used gradient is the default Linear



From humble gradients, mighty techniques can grow. Later in this chapter we'll use the Gradient Tool to create this amazing aurora effect

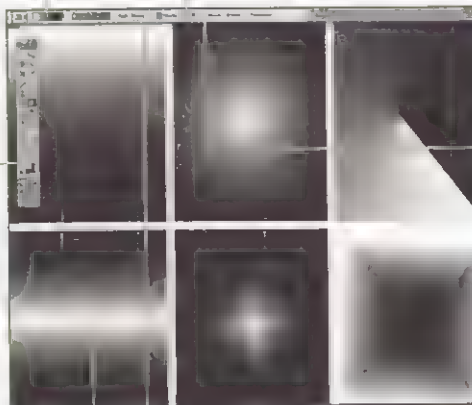
gradient, which mixes the foreground and background colours of an image in a straight line.

GRADIENT TOOL OPTIONS

Here's the tool's Presets picker. This is where the hidden power of the Gradient Tool really lies.

In its default mode, the Gradient Tool will mix the foreground and background colours in the toolbox. We'll add multiple colour changes to a gradient later in this chapter.

The Reflected gradient hints at the power of editable gradients. It mixes from black to white, then back to black instead of mixing between two gradient stops like the other options.



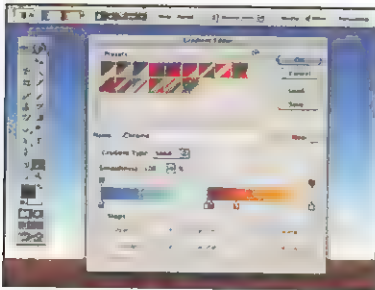
Change the overall transparency level of a gradient by typing a different percentage value into the Opacity window.

Normally the gradient will draw from foreground to background colour. Tick Reverse to swap this around (or press [X] to swap the colours in the toolbox around).

Change the blending mode of any gradient here. Alternatively, you can edit a gradient's blending mode using the Layers palette.

Editing gradients

Unleash the power of the Gradient Editor to customise your gradients

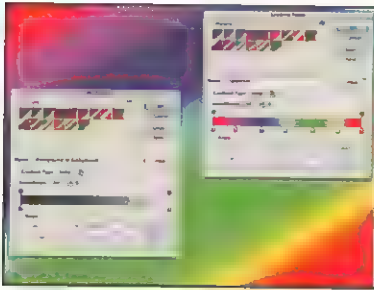


The key to using the Gradient Tool well is to be able to master its editing options. Select the Gradient Tool and click on the Tool Preset picker in the options bar. This will open the Gradient Editor. Here you'll see a variety of preset gradients, from the default Foreground to Background gradient to the more complex Chrome gradient.

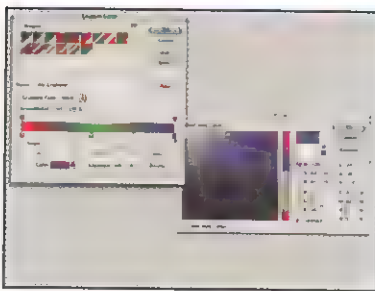


Explore the options

By exploring the options hidden in the Gradient Tool's Presets picker you can master the editing options that will turn a dull black and white Linear gradient into something unique.



All these preset gradients can be edited to create new types of gradient. You'll notice that some gradients have more colour stops than others. The Foreground to Background gradient has two colour stops – black and white. The Spectrum gradient has seven colour stops, giving the gradient much more variety and detail.

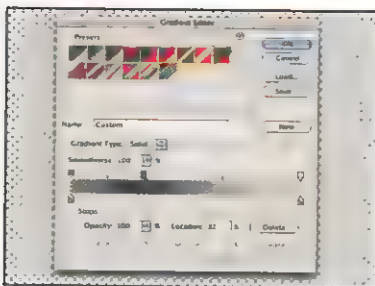


You can modify a gradient by changing the colour of the colour stops – simply click on them and choose a new colour from the picker. Alternatively, click on an image and sample a colour for your customised gradient using the Eye Dropper Tool. You can also add new colour stops to an existing gradient by clicking anywhere under the Gradient Preview bar.



Strike a balance

The Gradient Editor automatically places a midpoint between each colour stop to create a smooth linear blend between adjacent colours. You can tweak the effect of this blend by moving the midpoint to offset the mix between the colours. Using this technique you can create tight, dramatic blends between colours instead of smooth, gentle ones.



As well as editing colour stops for the gradient to blend between, you can also add different opacity settings to make it fade from solid to transparency. The opacity stops run along the top of the Gradient Preview bar. A black opacity stop indicates 100% solid. A white opacity stop indicates that part of the gradient is 100% transparent. Grey stops indicate values in-between.

Creative gradients

I can see a rainbow – and you can too, thanks to the Gradient Tool



Rainbow Background.jpg

Use this source file from the CD and add your rainbow to it. We'll also use the Gradient Tool to create a more suitable, drizzly grey background for the rainbow to contrast with.

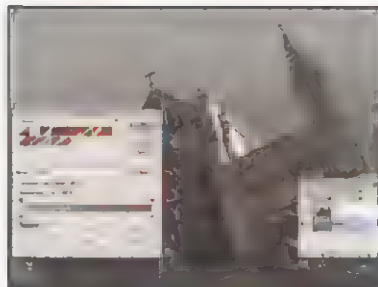


In the unlikely event of you being outdoors when a rainbow occurs, you only have a few minutes to grab your camera and frame a decent composition before the phenomenon dissipates. With the Gradient Tool we can add a realistic rainbow to any source image – whatever the weather! Open the file *RainbowBackground.jpg* and double-click on the layer thumbnail to unlock it.



Multiple rainbows

The Special Effects Rainbow gradient creates extra rainbows each time you draw on the layer, due to the fact that it has a transparent component. If you turn off the Transparency option in the options bar, each new rainbow you create will overwrite the previous one.



Use the Magic Eraser to remove the clear blue sky. Choose a Linear gradient setting and go to the Gradient Editor by clicking in the Options bar. Change the colour stops to make the gradient go from a lighter to a darker grey. Create a new layer and draw in the new gradient, keeping the lighter part of the gradient at the top to hint at the presence of the sun behind the cloud layer.



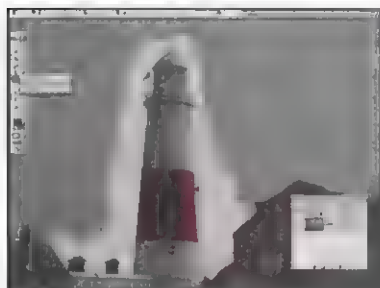
There's a rainbow in the Gradient Editor, but it's a little too large and linear to create a tight, realistically-curved rainbow. Click the pop-up triangle icon in the Presets window and load in some extra gradients from the Special Effects Library. Here you'll find a gradient called *Russell's Rainbow*, which has the colour stops more tightly packed together and larger areas of transparency.




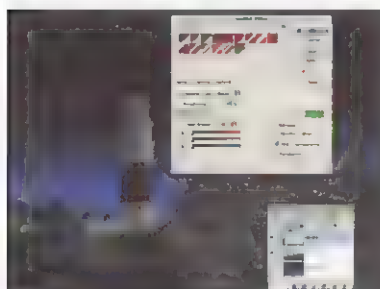
Draw on a new layer with the Special Effects Rainbow gradient. Make sure that you've ticked the Transparency button in the options bar to make use of the gradient's opacity stop settings. Delete the rainbow if it isn't suitable, and keep drawing until you have a rainbow that you like. The initial colours will be too garish, so set the Rainbow layer's blending mode to *Lighten*.


Amazing auroras

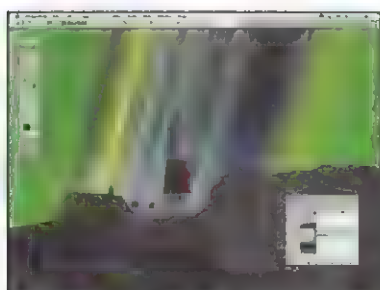
Push the Gradient Tool still further, to create even more amazing effects



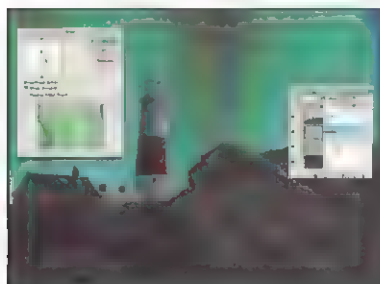
 The cascading clouds of interstellar particles known as the Northern Lights are even more elusive than a rainbow, but we can recreate this cosmic lightshow with the Gradient Tool. Open the file *aurora.jpg* from the CD. Use the Background Eraser to carefully remove the area immediately adjacent to the lighthouse. Then use a contiguous Magic Eraser to remove the rest of the sky.




 Add a light-to-dark blue Linear gradient to a separate layer to create a nocturnal background. From the Gradient Tool's Preset picker select the Black, White preset. Change the Gradient Type from Solid to Noise. This will give you bands of colour. Click the Add Transparency option. Hit the Randomize button until you get a colour combination you like. Adjust the Roughness to 60%.



 When you've finished fiddling around in the Gradient Editor to create vertical bars of colour, click OK. Create a new layer, place it under the lighthouse layer and draw across the screen using the Linear gradient. If you draw at an angle you'll get a slant to your vertical bands of colour. Tick the Transparency option in the options bar so you can see a hint of the blue sky through parts of the aurora.



 To enhance your gradient with a more natural shimmering effect, duplicate the aurora layer. With the copy selected go to Filter > Distort > Shear. Place control points on the vertical line in the Shear settings window and drag them left and right to distort the aurora layer. Click OK. Experiment with different layer opacities and blending modes to make the aurora look more realistic.



Hide and seek

When removing the murky cloudy sky of the source image, you'll need to reduce the tolerance of the Background Eraser to avoid erasing the lighthouse as well as the sky. A tolerance of 8% should be enough to remove the pixels immediately adjacent to the lighthouse. For tips on working smarter with the Background Eraser check out page 24.



Beautiful noise

Noise is often used to add grain to an image. Indeed, you can rough up the rather clean and clinical digital elements of your work by adding a little noise (Filter > Noise). This will help your special effects blend more effectively with the photographic elements in the image. Noise can also be used to break up a smooth gradient with random coloured bars, as we can see in step 2 here.

Gradients and masks

Use a Linear gradient and a layer mask to add depth to your digitally-created special effects



Mask magic

Layer masks are powerful ways of editing your existing layers. The white sections of the mask make the corresponding layer pixels appear solid. Grey sections of the mask cause the pixels on the adjacent layer to become semi-transparent. Parts of the mask that are 100% black will cause the corresponding layer's pixels to be totally hidden.

As well as allowing you to recreate some dramatic visual effects, like a rainbow or the Aurora Borealis, the Gradient Tool can also be used in a more subtle capacity to heighten the realism of your digital special effects. The rainbow and the aurora that we created in this chapter are both fairly two-dimensional; their colours are spread too evenly across a flat layer, causing the simulated natural phenomena to lack a sense of depth. However we can combine the Gradient Tool with a layer mask to adjust the distribution



The aurora is too evenly spread. We need to apply a gradient to a layer mask to fade the lower parts of the layer to transparency

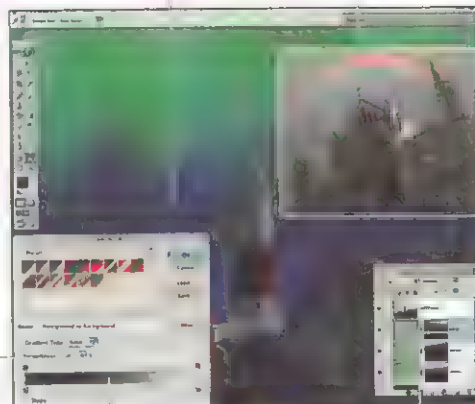
of pixels on a layer. This will enable us to create a more realistic 3D effect, as you can see below.

GRADIENTS AND LAYER MASKS

The Linear gradients on the layer masks cause the lower sections of the aurora to gently vanish, adding a sense of depth and variety to the 2D layer.

Make sure the gradient's Smooth value is set to 100% to keep the blend from solid to transparent nice and gentle.

Select a solid Foreground to Background Linear gradient. The blend from white to black will create a mix between solid and transparent layer colours when added to a mask.



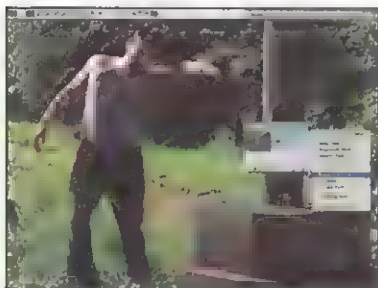
Try applying a Linear gradient to a layer mask on the rainbow image. This will add a more realistic fade to the end of the rainbow.

On each layer mask draw a Linear gradient. Make sure the gradient mixes from white at the top to black at the bottom.

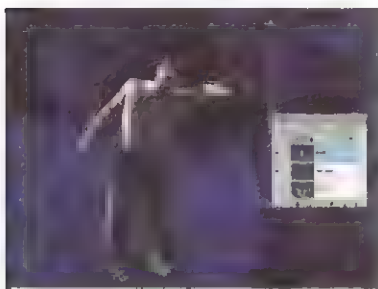
Select a layer and click on the Add a Mask icon. Do this for each layer that contains a component of your aurora effect.

Gradient maps

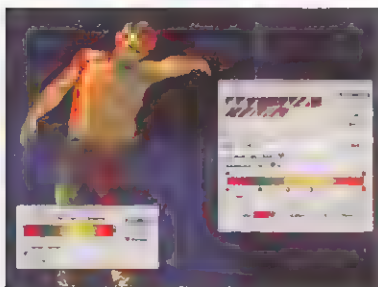
Use gradient maps to create the effect of a sniper's night-vision sight



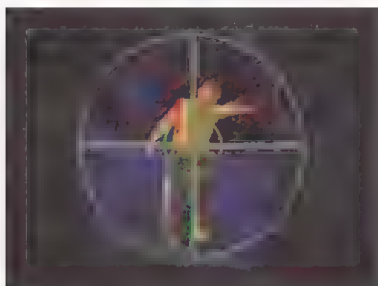
Another creative gradient-related tool is the Gradient Map. Using this technique you can edit and push a gradient through different parts of an image to create a striking effect. Open the file *HeatVision.jpg* from the CD. Unlock the layer by double-clicking on its thumbnail. Create a path to isolate the figure from the other elements in the scene.



Once you've drawn a path around the figure turn it into a selection. Go to **Select > Inverse** to select everything outside the path. Go to **Image > Adjustments > Desaturate** to remove the colour from the surroundings. Create a new layer, select a blue foreground colour and fill the selected part of the layer with it. Set the blending mode to **Hard Light** to turn the graveyard a nocturnal blue.



Invert the selection again to select the character. Click on the layer containing the colour version of the character and his monochrome surroundings. Go to **Image > Adjustments > Gradient Map**. Select the default Rainbow Gradient and delete any colour stops containing cooler blues and greens. This will push warmer colours through the character, creating a night-vision effect.



Create a new layer and use the Elliptical Marquee Tool to create the circular sight of a heat-sensitive night-vision scope. Create crosshairs using the Line Tool. On another new layer select the outside of the target circle and draw a green to black radial gradient to make the image fade to black towards the edges. Reduce this new layer's opacity so you can still see some of the background.



Gradient Map

The Gradient Map effect works by mapping the colours of a gradient to the greyscale range of an image. When used as a Gradient Map, the Gradient Tool fills the shadows of the image with colours from one end of the gradient. It fills the highlights of the image with colours at the opposite end of the gradient, creating a striking visual effect.



Layer styles

Give the circular target a bit of depth and extra definition by applying some layer styles to the graphic. Access the Layer Styles window by double-clicking on the layer's thumbnail. Add a Drop Shadow and an outer glow effect.

COVERING UP WITH THE CLONE TOOL

Work smarter by covering over any tell-tale tracks left by the Clone Tool, and discover the right time to swap the tool for its cousins – the Healing Brush and the Patch Tool

In the field of digital image manipulation, Photoshop's tools are like a team of world-class football players. You've got your run-of-the-mill team-fillers, such as the Hand Tool; they don't really do anything showy, but they fulfil the important role of allowing you to get to the relevant bit of the screen as and when you need to work on it. The Hand Tool can be activated by holding down the spacebar while other tools are being used it, so using it doesn't break your creative flow. It's out of the toolbox, does the job and gets back to its original position without you having to think too hard about using it. The

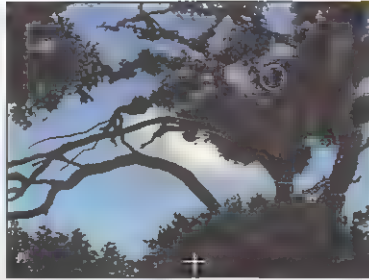
Photoshop team is dependant on solid players like the Hand Tool to function smoothly. But when it comes to scoring your creative goals you're going to need a team member that stands out from the rest – like the Clone Stamp Tool.

Star player

Most teams have their star performer, and the Photoshop team certainly has a few stars, but when it comes to pixel control the Clone Stamp Tool plays the others off the park – it's the David Beckham of team Photoshop! It has the power to alter an image without destroying its sense of photo-realism. If you've



Page 92 Use the Clone Stamp Tool to avoid common mistakes



Page 93 Use the Clone Stamp creatively to add leaves to a tree



Page 94 Copy, paste and manipulate as an alternative to cloning



Page 95 Repair damaged pixels by combining copying with cloning



Page 96 Poorly pixels? Make them as good as new with the Healing Brush



Page 97 Obliterate large unwanted areas with the powerful Patch Tool

mastered your handling of the Clone Stamp Tool, then anyone who views the edited image shouldn't notice that the tool has been used at all. Tool handling is another area of our work where we can work smarter; when we use selection tools like the Magic Wand we can sometimes leave a fringe of colour around the object that we're isolating, which gives away the fact that we've removed the image's original sky and replaced it with a different image.

Managing the team

The Clone Stamp Tool can also betray its involvement in image

editing if it's not used carefully. For example, pixels cloned from one area can be placed too close to their source. These details can then be re-cloned, creating a tiled effect, but this repetitive pattern points the finger at the Clone Stamp Tool's involvement. We'll look at working smarter in relation to this aspect of the Clone Stamp Tool later in the chapter. We'll also look at some of the Clone Stamp Tool's related team mates, to see how they perform a similar and complementary function. A smart team manager knows how and when to deploy the appropriate resources, and we'll help you to develop these skills with Photoshop.

The Clone Stamp

Got trouble-making pixels to tackle? Then it's time to unleash the Clone Stamp Tool



Foot.jpg

Make your mark using the Clone Stamp Tool by following in our footsteps. Use the tips and tricks below to remove a thumping great footprint from a crisp, clear field of snow.

The trick to mastering the Clone Stamp Tool is to sample pixels from different parts of an image. This avoids creating repetitive patterns which can draw unwanted attention to your cloning technique. The human eye is very good at spotting patterns, and without due care and attention, the Clone Stamp Tool can introduce unwelcome patterns to your work. If you sample pixels too close to the area that you want to remove, then you'll find it hard to avoid pixel repetition. There's even the danger of cloning



Here's a typical example of pixels being unwittingly repeated by poor use of the Clone Stamp Tool

feedback. This occurs if you re-clone an already-cloned area of pixels, which is in turn cloned again.

COVER YOUR TRACKS WITH THE CLONE STAMP TOOL

Mix the white and blue sections of snow together by reducing the opacity of the Clone Stamp Tool.

As well as changing the sampled area, disguise your cloned pixels by regularly changing the brush size. Right-click to get the pop-up Preset picker.

Press the [Alt] key to sample an area of snow, then move the cursor over a section of the footprint and click to spray pixels from the sampled area onto it.



Create a new layer. Then click Use All Layers. Now any cloned snow will appear on a separate layer, allowing you to remove it if you make a mistake.

Here's the original shot, with a great big footprint spoiling the virgin snow. The Clone Stamp Tool soon restores the snow to an unspoiled state.

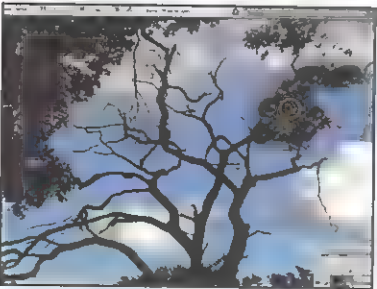
As you work on hiding one area, press [Alt] again to resample a fresh patch of snow. This avoids repetitive patterns.

Advanced Clone Stamp work

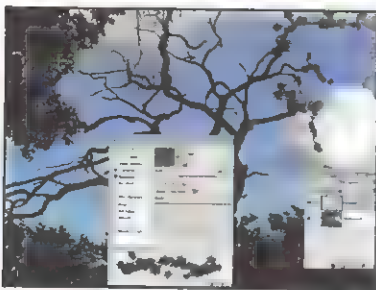
As the Clone Stamp is a brush-based tool, success depends on editing its brush attributes



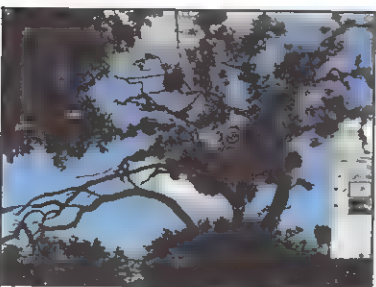
Cloning isn't just about removing unwanted elements by hiding them with alternative pixels. The tool can also be employed in a more creative capacity. Take this poor tree for example. Its neighbours are weighed down with a healthy coat of leaves while its naked branches are exposed to the elements. We'll call on the Clone Stamp Tool to assist us in a leaf transplant operation.



To avoid cloning the adjacent trees' trunks we have to sample leaves from small areas. To stop the Clone Stamp straying too far from the initial sample point, un-tick the Aligned option in the options bar. Now you can sample a section and spray it onto the bare tree. When you release the mouse button and start spraying on another branch, the tool will still clone leaves from the original point.



The brush used by the Clone Stamp makes the cloned leaves look unnaturally soft around the edges. Undo the brushwork you've applied in step 2 (File > Revert is a quick way). With the Clone Tool still active click on the Brushes palette icon in the options bar. Turn on Scattering. Click on the Texture setting to edit it. Choose a noise pattern to create a leaf-textured brush.



Take your new, improved Clone Stamp brush and get to work on covering the branches with leaves. Click once to spray a sample of leaves onto a branch, then move on to a new section. Right-click to adjust the brush size. This will add variety to your cloned brush. If you need to protect the lower trunk of the tree from unwanted leaves, select the trunk with a lasso and invert the selection.



Scatter and texture

To increase the realism and effectiveness of the Clone Stamp Tool we need to modify the Scattering and Texture attributes of its brush. For more in-depth information on working smarter with brushes check out Chapter 4.

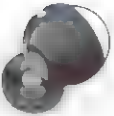


Tree.jpg

We've put our walkthrough shot of a poor naked tree on the CD so you can practise editing the Clone Stamp's brush attributes to create photo-realistic leaves from existing picture elements.

Copy and paste

Sometimes the subtle nuances of the Clone Stamp Tool are not required...



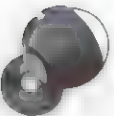
CopyandPaste.mov
Check out the training movie on the CD to hear us talk you through the techniques demonstrated on this page.



Here's an example of when the Clone Stamp Tool should be left on the bench. We're going to remove the Underground sign from this shot. The diagonal and vertical lines of the building behind the sign could be cloned over the sign, but getting them to align using the Clone Stamp's brush will be time consuming. Working smarter sometimes calls for a more direct approach – copy and paste.



Select the Polygonal Lasso from the toolbox [Shift]+[L]. Click to place four anchor points around the outline of the windows to the left of the sign. Go to Edit > Copy from the main menu (or [Control]+[C]), then choose Edit > Paste (or [Control]+[V]) to paste the section of windows to a new layer. Use the Move Tool [V] to position the newly-pasted window layer over part of the sign.



Sign.jpg
Tackle this unwanted Underground sign yourself by following the walkthrough using the same source image.



The copied buildings don't quite align with the diagonal and vertical lines of the windows that are obscured by the sign, due to changes in perspective as the windows shrink into the distance. Hit [Control]+[T] (PC) or [Command]+[T] to activate the Free Transform Tool. Drag the handles at the top of the selection down a little, so the pasted windows fit next to the original windows.



Duplicate the layer and repeat the Free Transform process to adjust the shape of each patch. You'll be left with thin vertical gaps containing the original sign. Copy more sections from the building and paste these over any remaining traces of the sign. As a finishing touch select the edge of the leaf that was patched over. Delete the leaf selection from the original patch to show the leaf.

Something from nothing

What if there isn't enough pixel information for the Clone Stamp to fix all of a damaged shot?

Cloning is similar to the copy and pasting method, as both techniques use existing pixels to replace unwanted pixels. In the previous example it was a fairly easy matter to copy, paste and manipulate large rectangular chunks of the building to hide the sign elements. Sometimes, however there's no suitable picture information to clone pixels from, so we have to fake the missing pixels. One area the Clone Stamp excels in is photo restoration, but in our example there's too much damage to the reflection of the



Part of the arm's reflection is ruined by a nasty stain. There's no way to recreate the reflection of a new arm using the Clone Stamp Tool alone

forearm. However, with a bit of digital surgery we can transplant the required pixels from the man's arm.



Stain.jpg

If you fancy tackling this monster of a restoration challenge, you'll find the original creased and stained source photo on the CD. The restored version is there as well (unstained.jpg), so you can see the effect you're aiming for by combining the Clone Stamp Tool with the Lasso Tool.

TO CLONE OR NOT TO CLONE

Once the original forearm has been tidied up using the Clone Stamp Tool to remove the subtle part of the stain, select it with the Lasso Tool and copy it.

Paste the copied forearm, then use Edit > Transform > Flip Vertical to create a mirror image.

In this example the Clone Stamp Tool can do much to restore the image to its former glory. Large chunks of the piano can be easily cloned to remove creases, for example.



A small, soft brush setting on the Clone Stamp Tool will allow you to quickly blast blemishes out of existence.

Lose the faded sepia look by going to Image > Adjustments > Desaturate.

As a finishing touch apply Image > Adjustment > Auto Contrast to make the blacks blacker and the whites whiter.

The Healing Brush

Sometimes using the Clone Stamp Tool is not the best option – we need the Healing Brush



Mode options

Like most tools, the Healing Brush has a Mode section in the options bar. Experiment with the options located here. Replace is a handy setting for certain jobs, as it preserves existing picture noise and film grain.



The Healing Brush is a relative newcomer to Photoshop's toolset. While the Clone Stamp can tackle most image-editing jobs, some tasks are better suited to its smarter cousin. The Clone Stamp samples pixels from one part of the image and deposits them on a chosen area. What you sample is what you get. This can make it hard to hide the involvement of the Clone Stamp Tool on textured surfaces.

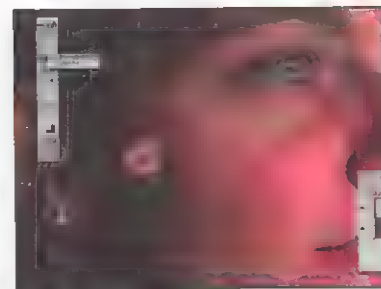


Aligned option

As with the Clone Stamp Tool, you can link the sampled section and the repaired section together using the Aligned option. With Aligned selected in the options bar the crosshair sample cursor and the circular repair cursor will maintain the same position relative to each other.



Let's look at how the two tools tackle a typical cosmetic enhancement shot. Our model has a spot, the odd freckle and a dry skin blemish near the nose. Using the Clone Stamp we've sampled a clear patch of skin and sprayed it over the spot. Because the Clone Stamp sampled an area of skin with a slightly different hue, we can see the skin graft quite clearly, even if a soft-edged brush is used.



For minor blemishes like skin pores and freckles the Healing Brush has a huge advantage over the Clone Stamp. The Healing Brush works by sampling the source pixels and the destination pixels. It then mixes between the samples to create a perfect blend. Treat it like the Clone Stamp, and hold [Alt]+Click to take a sample. When you start to spray the effect doesn't look that convincing.



It's only when you let go of the mouse button after spraying some sampled pixels that the Healing Brush works its magic. Once it has averaged the pixels together you won't be able to tell what's been edited. Reduce the brush size for more subtle healing on areas like the red patch of skin by the nose.

The Patch Tool

For larger repair jobs the Patch Tool will save you a great deal of time

The last, but by no means the least member of Photoshop's pixel-pummelling team is the Patch Tool – a close relation of the Clone Stamp Tool and the Healing Brush (indeed, it shares a toolbox section with the latter). The Clone Stamp Tool is the backbone of the team – it's a good all-rounder when it comes to removing unwanted pixels. The Healing Brush is a more subtle player, and comes in handy when a more gentle touch is required to tackle a cosmetic repair job. But for super speed and immediate results

on a larger scale, you need to call on the Patch Tool. This tool will take care of even the most daunting, large-scale pixel repair jobs in a matter of seconds.

Each of these related tools is an important part of the team, and working smarter means knowing when to call on a particular tool's services. Hopefully this chapter will have given you a taste of the strengths of each tool, so that you can make the right decisions about which tool to call on in your next creative match.



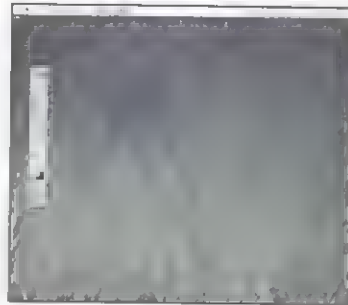
Push and pull

The Patch Tool works in two ways. Instead of placing one group of pixels on top of another using the destination option, select Source in the options bar. You can then draw around the section of an image that you want to patch, drag the cursor to another part of the screen and collect a pile of pixels to patch the original selection with. Experiment with both Source and Destination options to see which suits you best.

PERFECT PATCHES

The Patch Tool is like a souped-up Healing Brush. No job is too big!

Large chunks of unwanted pixels are no match for the power of the Patch Tool. It can remove a footprint in the snow in two seconds flat! Simply select the Patch Tool [J] from the toolbox. Then decide how you want it to work by clicking in the options bar. The best bet is to tell the tool to patch the Destination of a selection. Drag the mouse to roughly select a piece of untouched snow that's a little bigger than the footprint you want to patch over. Then click and drag the selection of smooth snow over the unwanted footprint. Photoshop does some sums, and smoothly merges the sampled patch with the pixels it's replacing.



We can roll out the Patch Tool to obliterate the unwanted footprint pixels in this image – not a bad result!

Chapter 8

SMARTER WAYS TO ADD YOUR SPECIAL EFFECTS

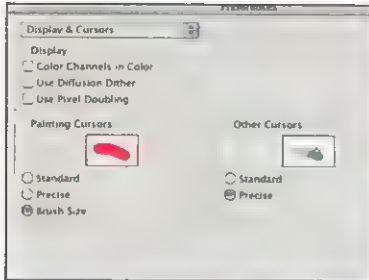
We'll help you improve your image-editing skills with a variety of tips and tricks – you don't have to accept what the camera says is reality, thanks to Photoshop's pixel-pulling power

Photoshop is many things to many people. You might use it to create fantastic surreal collages, photo-realistic montages or simply to remove a hint of red-eye from a family photo. Whatever use you put the package to, you can always improve your knowledge base and increase your skill level to help you work more efficiently, and more quickly too. Working through this book should open your eyes to ways of working smarter across a wide range of Photoshop's toolsets.

Altered perceptions

With the prevalence of cheap scanners and digital cameras there's

been a huge growth in the number of people wanting to do more than store their digital photos on their PC. People are no longer content to just go along with the idea that 'the camera never lies', and once Photoshop has got its hands on your image's pixels, you can easily change the appearance of reality itself. As well as tweaking the contrast and adjusting the levels of a shot, people are getting more and more creative in their image-editing ambitions. If a sunset isn't up to scratch in one shot, for example, then they're increasingly likely to pick up the Magic Wand, remove the unwanted dull sky and insert a



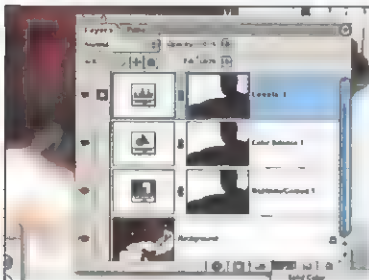
Page 100 Customise tool cursors for extra feedback and accuracy



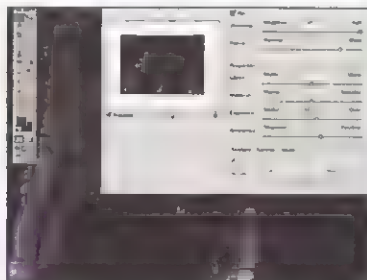
Page 101 Work within a selected area without distracting 'marching ants'



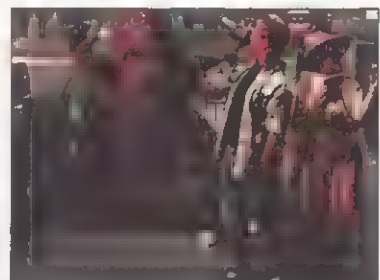
Page 102 Speed up transformations with the Free Transform Tool



Page 103 Edit layers non-destructively by using adjustment layers



Page 107 Create atmospheric lighting effects entirely within Photoshop



Page 108 Create realistic composited images with our tips and tricks

spectacular new sunset from another photograph altogether.

Photoshop offers a number of ways in which you can edit your images and change the appearance of a photograph in a photo-realistic way. Each image is made up of thousands, or millions of pixels – tiny square building blocks – and because we can use Photoshop to manipulate an image at the pixel level, we can change the 'reality' of the image altogether. Photoshop has many tools that you can employ to change an image's pixels from their initial state. You can Liquefy, Scale or Twirl them using a variety of filters, and even swap them with

other pixels using tools we've already looked at, such as the Clone Stamp.

Pixel pushers

In this chapter we'll look at ways to facilitate our image-editing work so that nothing gets between us and those precious pixels. As well as discovering ways to perform image editing more efficiently – see page 101 for example, where we'll look at how you can hide the 'marching ants' selection marquee while still keeping it active – we'll look at some creative techniques which enable you to generate Photoshop content from scratch, such as creating lightning effects.

Customising cursors

Work smarter by changing the default tool cursors to suit your image-editing needs



On target

Instead of permanently favouring one type of cursor over another, you can jump between a tool's default pictorial cursor to a more useful target crosshair cursor by turning the Caps Lock key on and off.

You may have used Photoshop for years without giving a thought to the type of cursors certain tools display when active – but these cursors can be a big help in speeding up your work. At a basic level they indicate which tool is currently selected and they also fulfil a functional role, by helping you to see where the tool is operating on the screen. However, some tools have multiple cursors; the Pen Tool, for example has several different versions which you can access from the toolbox. Save time by using

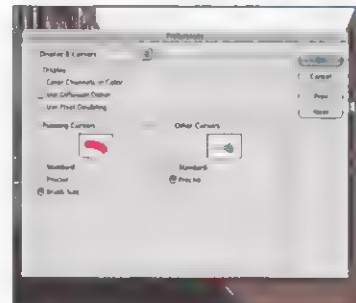
[Shift]+[P] to cycle through these options. The Pen Tool's cursor will change to show you which version you have selected, allowing you to add or subtract anchor points from a path without having to bother with the toolbox.

This type of visual feedback is something we take for granted, but it helps keep us informed of the nature of a tool's particular state at any given time. To work smarter when image editing we should not take the default cursors as set in stone – we can change them to suit our needs.

CHANGING CURSORS

Make more accurate selections by altering your cursors

In its default state Photoshop displays a small picture cursor representing the active tool. This is handy if you need to know which tool you've selected, but the more familiar you become with Photoshop, the more you'll want to take control over how tools are represented. Go to the main menu bar and select **Edit > Preferences > Display and Cursors (PC)**, or **Photoshop > Preferences > Display and Cursors (Mac)**. You can change the pictorial cursor to a more precise target crosshair cursor. For brush-related tools, it makes sense to set the cursor preference to display a circle indicating the brush size.



Change the pictorial cursors into something more useful by altering Photoshop's Cursor Preferences

Hide and seek

Edit within the confines of a marquee selection without being bothered by 'ants'...

There are dozens of different ways to make a selection in Photoshop, and dozens of reasons for making a selection. You may want to copy a section of pixels using the Freehand Lasso Tool to choose the desired shape. You can also create more complex selections by converting a Pen Tool path into an active selection. Selections are handy for controlling the influence of certain tools. You can draw a selection to restrict the range of the Clone Stamp Tool, for example, so that it doesn't inadvertently edit any

pixels outside the desired area.

The shape of each selection is indicated by the dotted 'marching ants' border. While this is a useful visual tool to display the boundaries of the selected area, it can get in the way during certain image-editing tasks. When you're cloning inside a selection it helps to be able to see how the cloned pixels are merging with the pixels on the border of the selection, and the marching ants will obscure your view. See below for some tips on hiding selections while keeping them active.



Fast feathering

Once you've made a selection that limits the effects of an image-editing tool to a specified area, you might want to feather it.

Right-Click
([Control]+[Click] on a Mac)
and select the Feather
option from the pop-up
context menu.

HIDING SELECTIONS

Keep your selections active but hidden

To remove the stains on the forearm of our subject in the last chapter we used the Clone Stamp to replace stained pixels with unstained ones. It could have been easy to accidentally clone areas outside the arm, so we made an arm-shaped selection to constrain the activities of Clone Stamp. The problem with the visible selection line is that we can't see how well the cloned pixels merge with the pixels at the edge of the selection. We might need to feather the selection a bit more, but it's hard to tell. Press [Control]+[H] to hide the selection, while keeping it active. Alternatively, go to View > Show and un-tick Selection Edges to hide them.



We can keep our tool confined to an actively-selected area without being distracted by those marching ants

Tasty transformations

Let's use the Transform tools to direct our own duck-tastic synchronised swimming team



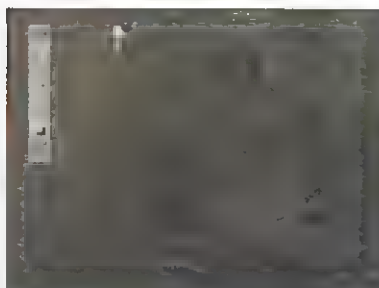
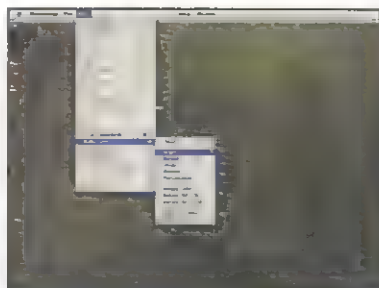
Duck folder

You'll find all the duck and pond source images used in this walkthrough on the CD. We've also included the finished, layered Photoshop document so you can see how the layer masks were applied to hide the water from the duck source images while keeping the ducks' reflections intact.



On location

If you want to create a similar illusion use a tripod with your camera and try not to move it. Then it will be even easier to add multiple ducks to the scene, as the angle of the water won't change in each shot.



Almost anything is possible with Photoshop – and we don't have to hang about for hours waiting for a perfect photo opportunity. So let's get creative with the transformation tools, and train a flock of ducks to swim in a perfect circle. Open the file Background.jpg. Open Duck01.jpg and select the duck using the Elliptical Marquee Tool. Copy and paste it into the background scene.



With the new duck layer selected go to Edit > Transform > Scale. Drag the selection handle from the corner to scale the duck down. Hold [Shift] to constrain the scaling – this will stop the duck's proportions being distorted. Carelessly-constrained transformations are a common example of poor image editing. Use the Move Tool [V] to position the duck as shown.



Duplicate the duck layer – we'll get this duck to double for one of his buddies. Go to Edit > Transform > Flip Horizontal to make him point the opposite way. Then hit [Control]+[T] to activate the Free Transform Tool. Now you can scale the duck down in the usual way, as well as rotating it a little. Move the cursor outside the selection window and it will change to a Free Rotate cursor.



Add the other ducks and use the Free Transform Tool to scale, rotate and flip them into position. To blend the water around the new ducks with the background, select each duck with the Magnetic Lasso Tool. Copy and paste the ducks onto a new layer. Then go back to the layers containing the water and add a mask to them. Use a Radial gradient to make the water vanish towards the edges.

Smarter layer editing

Experiment all you like without harming a single pixel by using adjustment layers

Not all Photoshop work involves reality-bending pixel manipulation. Sometimes you might just want to tweak an image's colour balance or contrast values to get a more aesthetically-pleasing print. Working smarter means having control over how you adjust your image. It's always useful to have the opportunity to experiment with your image adjustments, and to be able to retrace your steps if things go wrong.

You'll be familiar with undoing mistakes using [Control]+[Z], and might even walk back through

multiple stored history steps using [Shift]+[Control]+[Z]. Another way of experimenting with image editing that gives you instant access to the original untouched file is to use adjustment layers. These allow you to make changes to a layer without altering a pixel on the layer itself. This is an amazingly liberating way of working, as you don't have the worry of permanently altering the original layer. To undo an adjustment layer just drag it to the trash can in the Layers palette, or turn it off using the show/hide eye icon.



Blending modes

You can edit an adjustment layer's blending mode in the same way that you would edit a normal layer to experiment with the effect different blending modes have on the source image. You can also reduce the effect of the adjustment layer by lowering its Opacity setting.

ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

THE QUICKEST way to add an adjustment layer is by clicking on the New Adjustment Layer shortcut option at the bottom of the Layers palette. Alternatively, go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer in the main menu.

IF YOU make a selection on your original layer using the Lasso Tool, for example, any adjustment layers you create will only affect the selected area. Each new adjustment will automatically contain a mask to protect the unselected parts of the image.

BUILD UP your image adjustment slowly and effectively by combining the effects of multiple adjustment layers. You can then turn them on and off to fine-tune the effect they have on the original layer.

YOU CAN quickly identify adjustment layers by looking at their thumbnails' unique icons. They are also appropriately labelled, to help you spot which layer does what.



Non-destructive

Adjustment layers are a smart option when it comes to image editing, as they're non-destructive. This saves you having to make a duplicate of your image on a separate layer in case your edits don't work out.

Faking 3D

3D can be a very handy design tool, and Photoshop allows you to fake a 3D effect



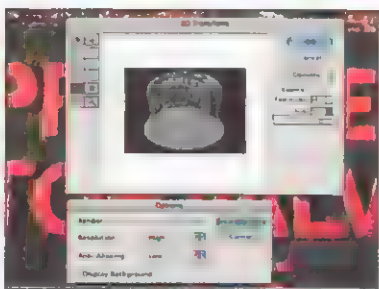
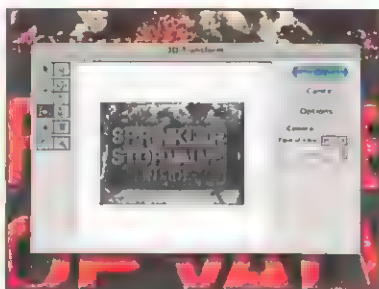
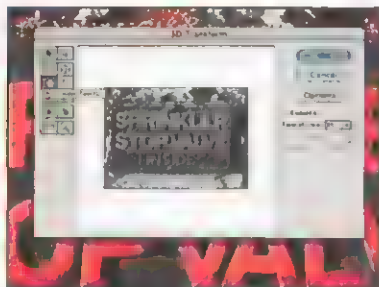
2D or not 2D?

Everything we do in Photoshop is in 2D. We work in the x and y-axes, moving pixels horizontally and vertically. But Photoshop acknowledges that occasionally it's handy for the designer to fake the impression of the z-axis, to give a 2D image the appearance of being 3D.



The more the merrier

You can add as many cubes, cylinders and spheres to a Photoshop image as you like, and build up quite complex 3D renderings in a matter of minutes. Just select the required shapes and drag them one by one to the preview window, where you can reposition and resize them.



Photoshop features a basic 3D modelling and rendering tool which is good for simulating how a 2D design might look once applied to an object. It saves you having to create a 2D texture map and export it to a 3D package. Select the image destined for the 3D treatment and go to **Filter > 3D Transform**. Select a primitive 3D shape – we'll use a cylinder – and draw in the preview window.



You can pinch the cylinder inwards at its middle – this is like performing a lathe in a 3D program. Select the **Add Anchor Points** tool and click on the right-hand vertical line of the green wireframe shape. Then drag the line so that it curves inwards. This will pinch the cylinder in at both sides. You can use the **Add** and **Subtract Anchor Point** tools to tweak the default primitive shapes.



Un-tick the **Display Background** option to hide any parts of the image that don't overlap the wireframe cylinder. Hiding non-3D sections of the image will help to sell the 3D effect. Choose a rendering quality. Select the **Pan Tool**, and click-and-drag in the preview window to position the wireframe over the relevant parts of the image. Use the **Trackball Tool** to rotate the image in 3D.



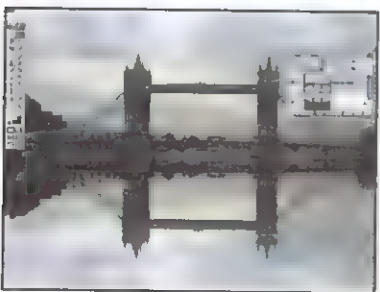
When you've experimented with panning and rotating your textured 3D object you can zoom out with the virtual camera using the **Dolly Slider**. Increase this to zoom out until you can see the entire 3D shape in the preview window. When you're happy with the preview click **OK**. Think twice about applying the filter, as you'll lose all your settings and wireframe edits once you do.

Faking reflections

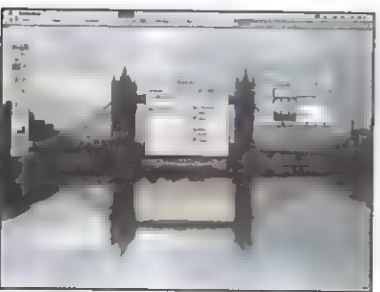
By editing an image in Photoshop you can improve it realistically, as well as aesthetically



1 Sometimes photo manipulation is quite radical, but when done correctly it should be invisible to the viewer. You want them to admire the image for its composition and contents, not for your nifty pixel-pushing – even if you’ve added a whole new element to a scene. Let’s add a reflection to enhance this drab shot – open *Towerbridge.jpg*.



2 Pick the Rectangular Marquee Tool [M] and select the top section of the image. Make sure you include the base of the bridge in the selection. Copy it, and paste it onto a new layer. Go to *Edit > Transform > Flip Vertical* to create an upside-down version of the bridge. Click [V] to activate the Move Tool and position the bridge as shown. As it stands the reflection looks fake, as it’s too clean.



3 Now for the fun stuff. Select the flipped reflection layer. To give the reflection a sense of perspective go to *Filter > Blur > Radial Blur*. Experiment with different values; we used a setting of 23. The trick to pulling off most special effect image-editing tricks is not to overdo the filter value. To get the perspective of the blur correct, move the *Blur Center* so it matches the horizon in the image.



4 In real life reflections don’t show up in the highlights of a rippling surface. To fake this effect we’ll use the original image’s highlights to break up our reflection. Select the reflection layer and change its blending mode to *Overlay*. This blends the filter-created reflection and the highlights of the layer underneath. For greater subtlety reduce the opacity of the reflection to 77%.



Ripples in the water
As the icing on the cake you could try applying a hint of ripple to the reflection layer. Do keep it subtle though, as obvious use of filters will give away the fact that image editing is afoot



Towerbridge.jpg
Add your digitally-manipulated reflection to this source image. The original reflection is pretty poor thanks to a dull day and wind rippling the water. The ripples ruin the water’s natural mirror-like properties. Thankfully, Photoshop can take control of the elements and calm the wind, so that the water becomes as still as a millpond.

Lightning strike

Recreate natural elemental forces using our cunning Cloud filter-based technique



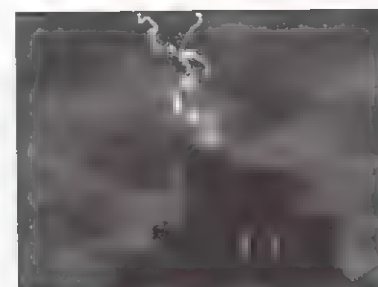
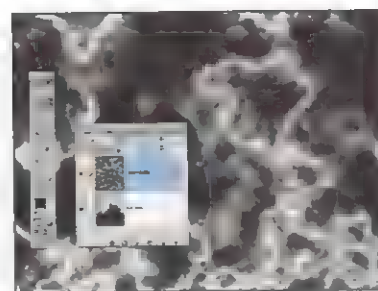
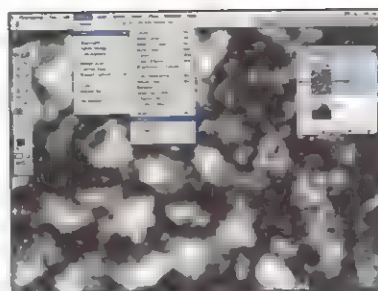
Cloud filter fun

The Cloud filter formed the basis for this lightning effect. Clouds can be used for a variety of image-editing enhancements. We created the dramatic stormy sky in this image by applying the Cloud filter to a blank layer. We then used the Perspective and Scale transform tools to add depth to the 2D cloud layer.



Changing colours

The Cloud filter works by generating a random mix between the foreground and background colours. You can create effects such as fire by changing the foreground and background colours to orange and red.



On the previous page we used smart image-editing techniques to fight the forces of nature. Now we'll add a lightning bolt effect to an image using a combination of filters, image adjustment techniques and the Magic Wand. Working smarter means combining a whole host of tools to achieve a desired result. Open LightningStrikes.jpg, and prepare to act like Thor!

2 Use the Magic Eraser to remove the white sky and create a new layer. Press [D] to make sure your toolbox Foreground and Background colours are the default black and white. Go to Filter > Render > Clouds. Choose Filter > Render > Difference Clouds. Press [F] to apply this filter a couple more times until you get vein-like zigzag lines appearing in the clouds.

3 Turn the black veins white by selecting Image > Adjustments > Invert, or pressing [Control]+[I] (PC) or [Command]+[I] (Mac). These veins will form the lightning bolts. Set the Magic Wand to Contiguous, with a tolerance of around 12 and use it to select a particularly zigzag-shaped section from the cloud layer. Copy and paste this selection onto a new layer and hide the original cloud layer.

4 Tidy up the lightning layer by erasing unwanted sections of the bolt. Use the Erase tool [E], or add a layer mask to the layer so you can use a black brush on the mask to hide the bits of lightning that don't look right (and a white brush to restore any masked sections). Use the Move Tool to position the edited bolt to hit its target. Duplicate the bolt and blur the copy to add a glow to the bolt.

Let there be light!

Now we'll go from faking lightning to creating realistic lighting effects

Lighting adds depth and detail to an image, and can also be used to conjure up a sense of atmosphere. In this example we decided not to shoot our cathedral location at night; instead we adapted a daytime shot and created our own nocturnal illuminations using the Lighting Effects filter. This approach gave us greater control of the lighting set-up. As a starting point, we used Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation to colour the image a cooler midnight blue. Then we went to Filter > Render > Lighting Effects to enhance our



Our daytime cathedral shot isn't particularly atmospheric. Fortunately we can enhance the mood by shining spotlights onto the building

scene with dramatic spotlights. Check out the annotated screenshot below to see the filter in action.



Textured lighting

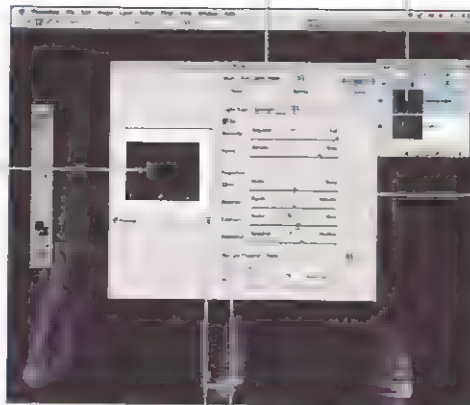
You can add texture to your filter-generated lights to give them a more embossed 3D look. Simply choose one of the image's Red, Green or Blue Texture channels as a source. Alternatively, create a new channel in the Channels palette and add content to it, such as clouds or text. You can then get that channel to appear in the beams of light.

THE LIGHTING EFFECTS FILTER

Instead of creating lights from scratch, we adapted an existing lighting set-up found in the Style menu.

To rotate a light or increase the width of its beam, use the manipulation handle that appears when you select it. You can get it to point in any direction.

To delete unwanted lights drag them onto the trash can icon. We ditched two out of the five lights from the Five Lights Down preset style.



Create a duplicate layer before you start adding filter-generated lights in case the effect isn't to your liking. You can also reduce the layer's opacity to make the lighting more subtle.

Adjust the Light Properties for a more realistic beam. Reduce values in the Gloss and Material channel to 0.

Increasing the Ambience setting extends the influence of a spotlight light outside the confines of its narrow beam.

Smarter compositing

Compositing is very easy to get wrong, so here are some tips on doing it right!



Flipping shadows

If you have mismatching light sources in your various picture elements you might be able to correct things by using **Edit > Transform > Flip Horizontal** to get the composited shadows to match. This will radically alter the composition of the characters, though.

Digital compositing is the art of cutting out an object from one source image and overlaying it on another. Compositing different photographic elements together is the type of bread-and-butter job that Photoshop excels at. It's also tricky to do well; when we cut out a figure from one scene and add it to another there are lots of tell-tale clues to give away the fact that the various elements don't really belong together. Check out the box below for the more obvious signs of poor compositing. Once you can identify



The actors here were shot in a studio against a bluescreen, and composited into the location shot. Fake shadows help anchor them in the scene

the most common compositing clangers, you can work smarter by avoiding those mistakes.



Good grades

Be aware that the black and white levels in your separate images might be different – this will give away the fact that the composited elements don't belong together. Grade your shots to match by looking at their Levels histograms and tweaking them.

COMMON COMPOSITING ERRORS

- ☐ **LIGHTING** – If the light source in one image comes from a different direction in the second image, then you'll get shadows pointing in the wrong direction on the composited elements. This is why photographs which have been shot on a flat-lit, cloudy day are more likely to composite together successfully.
- ☐ **COLOUR TEMPERATURE** – Indoor and outdoor light have different colour 'temperatures'. The camera sees indoor light as orange, and outdoor light as blue. If you mix images shot indoors and out, use Photoshop's **Image > Adjustments > Colour Balance** option to get them to match.
- GRAIN** – When you scan in a 35mm print you can see the film grain quite clearly. Even with digital images, you still get grain-like artefacts when you zoom in close enough. When you scale up an image from one source, you also scale up the grain in that image. Mismatching grain is a dead giveaway that the image has been composited.

Isolating colour

Let's get creative by using colour – and the absence of selected colours

Colour is a powerful tool for the designer. In the advertising industry colour can be used to manipulate how an image is viewed, by drawing attention to a product or element. This effect can be greatly enhanced if other colours are subdued, or even removed entirely. Film makers also use selective or isolated colours to add meaning to the shot – a classic example was when Steven Spielberg used colour isolation to draw attention to a little girl in *Schindler's List*, by removing all colour in the frame except the red



We were able to isolate and preserve this car's blue paintwork in a couple of seconds using Photoshop's colour correction tools

of her coat. Photoshop's toolset gives you total command over selecting and isolating your colours.



Monitor profiles

When working with colour it helps if you're confident that what you see on your monitor is what you'll get in print. You can create a colour profile to help achieve this. PC users can use the Adobe Gamma software that comes with Photoshop to create a profile for their monitor. Mac users can go to the Displays section of their System Preferences, and click on Color to calibrate their monitor.



Saving time

When making colour corrections using certain commands, you can save time by saving the settings.

For example, if you use Hue/Saturation to warm up a cool shot, you can save the position of the sliders and apply the settings to another shot with similar colour correction needs.

COLOUR CORRECTION TECHNIQUES

TO ISOLATE a particular colour from an image go to Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation. In our blue car example we wanted to isolate and preserve the car's paintwork, so we selected the other colours in the dialog box and reduced their Saturation values to 0, leaving the blue untouched.

TO ISOLATE a girl dressed in green when she's standing in a green field you'll need to select her outline, then invert the selection to include the unwanted green elements. You can apply the Saturation technique to lose the green in the background without removing the protected green elements in her clothing.

THERE ARE many ways to manipulate colours in Photoshop. The Replace Color menu (Image > Adjustments > Replace Color) enables you to select a colour or range of colours with an Eyedropper, then edit them using sliders. This is a great way of giving a car a new paint job!

Chapter 9

PUTTING THE THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Now it's time for the grand finale, as we leap into a major creative project and put into practice many of the tips and techniques we've covered throughout this book

Well, are you feeling smarter yet? While we can't claim to have boosted your IQ, we do hope that you've learned plenty of new skills which will help you to improve your Photoshop work, regardless of the type of jobs you use the software for. For starters you should now have an interface customised especially for you, whether you're a picture restorer or a DVD menu designer. And as you would expect, a book on working smarter in Photoshop covers a vast range of tips and techniques, from colour correction to customising your brush tips. You've also learned how to create time-saving actions,

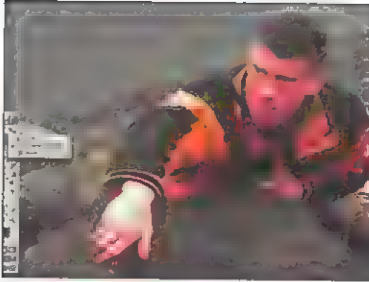
and looked at the many different ways Photoshop provides for cutting out a figure from its background.

Practise what we preach

We're firm believers in the idea that you'll learn more by performing a particular technique than you will by simply reading about it. To help you learn more effectively we've included mini-walkthroughs on many of the earlier pages in this book – check the CD for sample images you can practise on. Now we're going to tackle a whole chapter of practical work, to help you brush up on your skills and put some of the tips and techniques

At the end of Chapter 9...

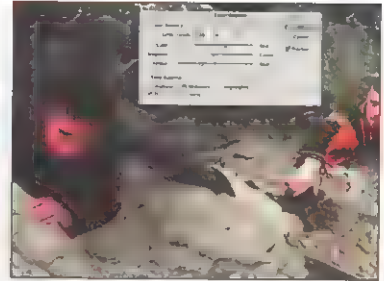
- ☐ *Planning your project*
- ☐ *Applying interface techniques*
- ☐ *Using Photoshop to create a new background*
- ☐ *Working with layers and the Clone Stamp*
- ☐ *Using the Lasso to remove a portion of an image*
- ☐ *Improving photographic quality*



Page 112 Cut out a character using the Polygonal Lasso Tool



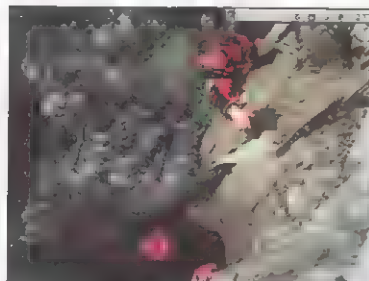
Page 113 Paste him into a new background and tidy things up



Page 115 Perform a successful rock transplant using colour correction



Page 116 Bring in the tide using the Clone Stamp Tool



Page 118 Fake a camera angle to heighten the sense of drama



Page 120 Compose and blend a CGI lighthouse into the main image

that we covered earlier into action.

So, are you sitting comfortably? If you're not, check out page 19 for tips on organising your workspace to facilitate your Photoshop work. The fewer physical distractions or constraints, the more effective your Photoshop work will be. After working through this book you should also have a better grasp of the tools available to you, and a better knowledge of how to access those tools more quickly using a variety of keyboard shortcuts.

Seeing is believing

In this final chapter we're going to create a movie-style action scene by

combining and manipulating a variety of source images. We're going to isolate our protagonists from the safety of the ground and place them in a more perilous location – half-way up a cliff. We'll also introduce a sense of depth and danger to the scene by rotating the image's angle off-kilter and adding a radial blur.

The idea is to create a completely photo-realistic special effect shot, so that the viewer won't be able to spot any digital trickery. We'll need our wits about us, and will have to choose the right tools for the job. Are you with us? Then let's go and climb that cliff, Photoshop style!

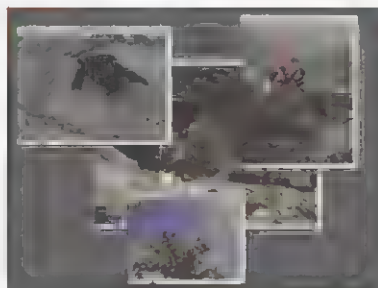
Know your assets

Make sure you're familiar with your project's components before you start editing them



All the elements

The source files that you need to complete this project are on the CD. Look out for *Hero.tif*, *Villain.tif*, *Cliff.tif* and *Bush.tif*. The rest of the elements will be created within Photoshop.



1 When approaching a creative project involving multiple source files, it's a good idea to take a look at them all together. Open the files for this project (see sidebar) and lay them out. Hit **Control+[]** to shrink them down, so they all fit on the screen. This will help you get familiar with your files and see how they relate to each other.

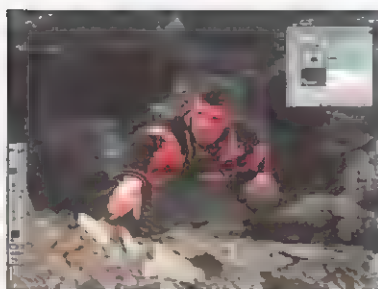


Carry your camera

When you're developing a rough idea for a project, don't go anywhere without your digital camera. The idea for this project came for a trip to a reservoir, where my brother John posed as if he was climbing a steep cliff. On a trip to the Dorset coast months later I was able to get some decent shots of real cliffs to add him to.



2 Open the file *Villain.tif*. Roughly and quickly select our baddie using the Polygonal Lasso Tool to isolate him from his scene. The rock he's clinging to is not the same as the cliff in the background image (*Cliff.tif*), but don't worry about removing him cleanly from his background just yet. Feel free to bring a surrounding chunk of rock with him – we can tidy up the selection later.



3 Copy the rough selection. Work smarter by accessing the already-open *Cliff.tif* file that's hidden behind the other open files. Hit **[Control]+[Tab]** to bring new files to the front, until the cliff backdrop file is visible. Press **[F]** to go to Full Screen Mode. This will hide other files, and remove desktop clutter. Paste the selection into a new layer in the *Cliff.tif* file.



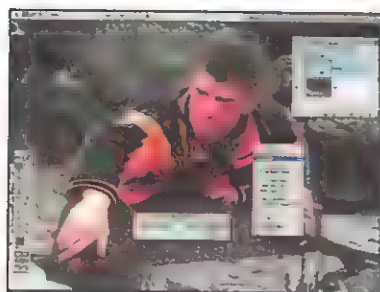
4 Pasting the roughly-selected image into our cliff face means we can get the layout and composition right before spending time on finer details, like removing unwanted rock elements around our figure's outline. Hit **[Control]+[T]** to activate the Free Transform Tool. Hold **[Shift]** to constrain the layer's proportions and scale the baddie down. Use the Move Tool **[V]** to reposition him.

Smooth the rough edges

Tidy up the bad guy's rough-edged selection by masking unwanted elements



1 Once the bad guy is in position zoom in to edit his layer. You can take your pick of the zoom options using the navigator, keyboard shortcuts or by double-clicking on the Zoom Tool icon to jump to Actual Pixels. Select his outline using the Magnetic Lasso (or check out Chapter 2 for alternative selection techniques). Set the lasso to a Pixel Width of 4 and an Edge Contrast of 25%.



2 When you've made your selection with the Magnetic Lasso, right-click inside the selection and choose Feather from the context pop-up menu. A value of 2 will help to soften the outline by making it blend with the pixels in the background when we add a layer mask. This is the key to avoiding the jagged, cut-out look that would betray the fact that this is a digital composition.



3 Click on the Add a Mask icon to place a mask thumbnail next to the baddie's layer thumbnail. A black and white layer mask is created from the active Magnetic Lasso selection. The white areas on the mask maintain the layer's solidity, so we can still see the subject. The black areas hide unwanted rock elements by making them transparent. The man now appears to be climbing the rock.



4 Fine-tune his position with the Move Tool and tweak his size with the Transform tools to make it look as if he's holding onto the rock face from the background layer. The rock he was originally holding was too different to the background scene, so it made sense to remove it completely. To complete the illusion, anchor him into the image by using the Dodge Tool to add some shadows to the cliff.



Label layers

As we're working smarter we'll keep on top of our project management by labelling layers as we add them. This saves us from the chore of having to label lots of layers later and means we can instantly see which layer contains which elements.



Soft edges

When we create a layer mask in step 3, the feathered edge of the Magnetic Lasso Tool's selection softens the join between masked and unmasked elements. This gives the visible parts of the layer a nice soft edge, so they blend more effectively with the layer underneath.

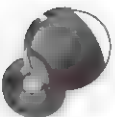
Enter the hero

Now it's time to add our hero to the scene, along with a huge chunk of rock!



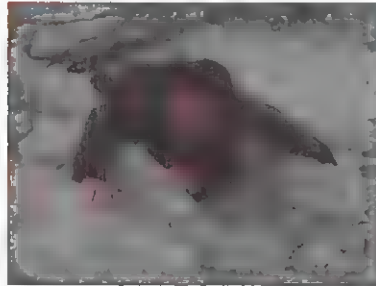
Super selections

No selection tool will give perfect results when first applied. Get familiar with using the Quick Mask Mode to fine-tune your selections. We'll also look at using Quick Mask's more powerful big brother – the Layer Mask – later in this walkthrough to give us total control over what's seen and what's hidden.



Hero.tif

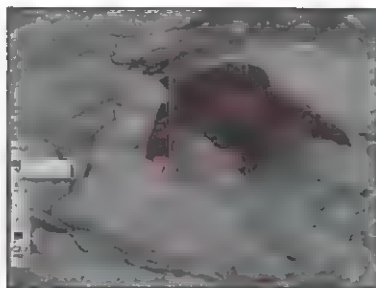
This source image was taken at the base of a cliff in Dorset's Lulworth Cove. (There's no way I was going to hang off the cliff itself!). Why not personalise this project by photographing yourself or a friend in a similar pose? You can apply all the techniques in this walkthrough to add them to the action scene. We've risked life and limb to get you the spectacular cliff-top shot, so you can use it in your own projects!



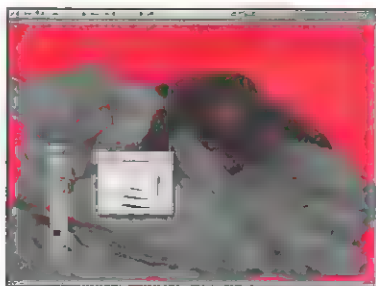
1 Open the file Hero.tif. The hero's rock is similar to the rock in the background image, so a rock transplant should be possible. The figure's position is also dependent on the contours of the rock he's lying on, making it harder to match him with the contours of the cliff in the background image. He will also be larger in the frame – another good reason to keep him attached to his own rocky pixels.



2 Select the hero using the selection tool of your choice. Many Photoshop users favour one tool over another. You could utilise the Pen Tool's path-making abilities, but given the nice contrast between the hero and the rocks there's plenty for the Magnetic Lasso Tool to work with. It's smarter to use the tool that will give you the best results in the shortest time.



3 As you select the hero, select a large chunk of the surrounding rock he's climbing on as well. The Magnetic Lasso will have little trouble creating a path between the dark-clothed character and the lighter rock. When the selection is complete, right-click ([Control]+click on a Mac) inside the selected area, and set the Feather value to 2 pixels.



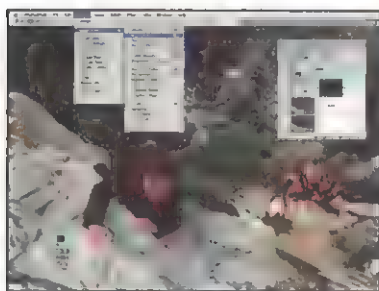
4 If the Magnetic Lasso has missed some of the foreground rock don't waste time redoing the selection. Press [Q] to go to Quick Mask Mode. All areas outside the selection will show up in red. Press [B] to activate the Brush Tool. Right-click to adjust the brush's size and softness values and spray a black brush over unwanted red areas. Press [Q] again to come out of Quick Mask Mode.

Colour correction

Colour correct the newly-transplanted rock face, and merge it with the background cliff



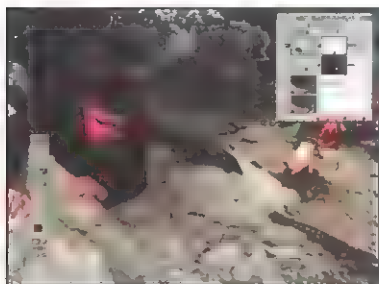
1 Copy the selected rock area and go to the main layered project. Paste the selection (Photoshop will automatically add it to a new layer for you to label and edit). The copied hero layer will initially be too large for the scene, so needs to be scaled down. Press [Control]+[T] (PC) or [Command]+[T] on a Mac to activate the Free Transform Tool. Drag the corner handles to scale the image as shown.



2 The main problem we face is that the transplanted rock is a different colour to the background cliff. To make the hero's rock compatible with the background select Auto Levels from the main menu bar. This will bring the rocks' shadows and highlights more into line with those of the background layer.



3 The new rocks have a slightly colder (bluer) colour cast compared with the warmer (yellower) cast of the background rocks. Isolate the rocks from the hero, as we don't want to alter his colour values. Go to Image > Adjustments > Color Balance. Adjust the Blues slider by pushing it towards the Yellow end. Push the Cyan towards the Red a touch to complete the colour match.



4 Our hero's rock still doesn't merge perfectly with the background, so add a layer mask to the hero's layer. Take a soft-edged black brush to the mask and carefully paint out the unwanted edges where the foreground rock overlaps the background cliff. Try and blend similar lines and patterns in the rock faces together. Painting white on the mask will restore any rock you've hidden.



Mix and match

Working smarter means leaving your creative options open by masking pixels, rather than destroying them permanently. When using a layer mask to hide parts of the foreground layer, you have total control over which pixels are hidden and which are visible. Experiment with the mask to get the perfect blend between the rock faces.



Brush tip

If you erase too much of the foreground rock when spraying your brush on the layer mask, simply press [X] to change the mask brush to white. This will let you paint any previously-hidden details back into the shot. Mix quickly between white and black until you've successfully blended the rock in the two layers.

Careful cloning

Our hero and villain have got it a little too easy, so let's bring in the tide, Photoshop style!



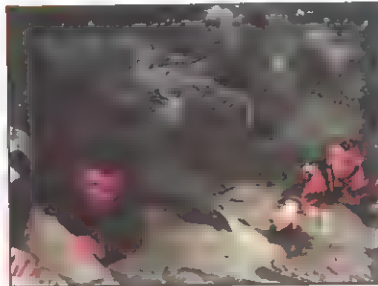
Total control

When you're using any brush-based tool, increase your level of control by using a pressure-sensitive stylus and graphics tablet instead of a mouse. In this way you can vary transparency and brush size more intuitively and more quickly.

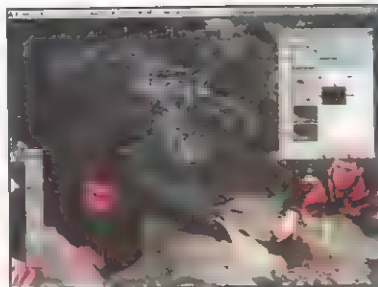


Modify a selection

In step 4 you protect the characters from the effects of the cloned sea with a dotted selection line. If this line isn't close enough to the subjects' outline the Clone Stamp might leave a fringe of pixels that run along the selection line, giving away the fact that the sea was cloned up against the selected area. To tighten the selection go to **Select > Modify > Contract**. Choose a value of 1 pixel. The whole selection will tighten like a noose, allowing you to clone right up to the edges of the two characters.



1 Our cliff-climbing protagonists would plummet to the rocks below should one of them lose their grip. In most movies the hero usually manages to avoid such a fate, so let's make things safer and remove those distant rocks. Create a protective selection around the actors and the cliff face so that we don't inadvertently remove these areas. Then get to work with the Clone Stamp.



2 We'll use the Clone Stamp to extend the ocean over the rock at the base of the cliff. Implement the Clone Stamp tips on page 92, and create a new layer to add the cloned elements to. In this way you can delete the layer's contents if you make a mistake. Select the new layer thumbnail and label it **Cloned Sea**. Set the tool's options to **Use All Layers**, so you can sample the sea from the original layer.



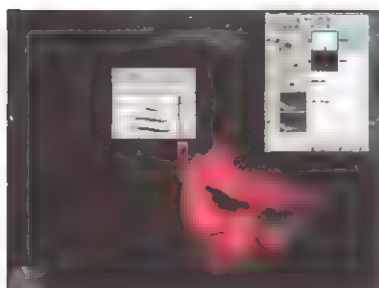
3 With the Clone Stamp active, click while holding **[Alt]** to sample a section of sea. Release **[Alt]** and start spraying the sampled sea over the unwanted rock. To disguise the Clone Stamp's activities sample little and often – this will stop repetitive patterns from creeping in. Also right-click (or **[Control]** click on a Mac) to vary the brush size. This will help to cover the Clone Stamp's tracks.



4 Continue sampling sea and spraying it over the rocks until they're submerged. Notice that the selection you made earlier prevents the Clone Stamp from erasing the cliff or the characters so you can use it more accurately, and faster. To see the effectiveness of the protective selection while still keeping it active, press **[Control]+[H]** or **[Command]+[H]** (Mac) to hide the 'marching ants'.

Tidying up

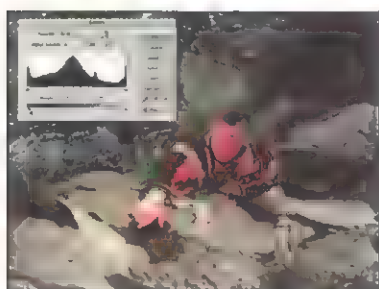
Before we carry on with the fun stuff, let's make our elements gel together more effectively



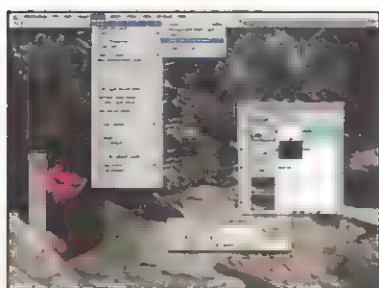
1 Before adding new elements to the image, let's tidy up any remaining rough edges. Select the hero layer and zoom in close to look for any unwanted elements. In our example there's a hint of a line bordering his jacket. This is caused by a few leftover pixels from the background of the hero's original image. Go to the hero's layer mask and use a tiny soft black brush to hide these pixels.



2 Zoom out and look at the image as a whole to see how the separate elements are coming together. Notice that the bad guy is slightly sharper than the softer-focused background image, making it obvious that he's been pasted onto the shot. Go to Filter > Render > Gaussian Blur. Type in a low value of 0.2. This will gently soften his layer to help it blend with its surroundings.



3 To blend our baddie more effectively with the background, reduce his black levels a tad. The blacks in the distant pixels that make up the rock and sea aren't 100% black, so he stands out a little too much. Select the bad guy's layer and go to Image > Adjustments > Levels. In the dialog box grab the black level's slider and move it to change the Output Level to 5.



4 If you haven't already done so, label your layers. Then organise them into related sets. We'll put the characters into one set and the natural elements into another. Select the hero layer and click on the baddie layer's chain icon to link the two together. Go to Layer > New > Layer Set from Linked. Label the Set and colour-code it, and do the same with the natural elements.



Stay sharp

In step 2 we blurred the bad guy, but left the hero untouched. As the hero is closer to the camera and lying on a sharply-focused rock from the same shot, we can keep him nice and sharp to emphasise his proximity. This change in focus from sharp to soft helps add depth to the shot.



Save often

As you change levels, add blur and so on, you're altering your source files. While you can step back through the History states to undo multiple edits, you have a limited number of steps that you can retrace. Save your layered document regularly as File01.psd, File02.psd and so on, so that you can easily step back to earlier versions of the project should you want to try a different approach.

Vertigo

Now we'll add an off-kilter camera angle to enhance the sense of depth – and danger



Going Dutch

A 'Dutch' angle in film terminology is when the director deliberately adjusts the tripod so that the vertical elements in a scene are portrayed as slanted. Due to the uneven tripod we see the action from an unfamiliar perspective, adding a new layer of meaning to the movie. We get the feeling that things 'aren't quite right'. This could be used to introduce a sense of unease to the scene.



Eye of the beholder

Our original plan was to flip the image vertically, so the actors were at the top of the image – they looked like they were clinging to a ceiling. While this added a sense of danger, it made our test viewers want to rotate the image to see the actor's faces. Getting feedback from a third party is a good idea, as they won't be as familiar with the material as you are and will frequently have valuable insights to offer.



1 At this stage a viewer might still spot that the actors were photographed lying on fairly shallow (and non-threatening) slopes. So let's add a sense of vertigo to the image by creating a non-natural camera angle to heighten the sense of drama. This will also position the virtual camera directly above the sea, disguising the fact that all the elements were photographed from the ground.

2 Press [F] to go to Full Screen Mode. Zoom out so you can see the neutral grey desktop area surrounding the shot. Link both layer sets, so any transformations you apply will alter every layered component. Press [Control]+[T] (PC) or [Command]+[T] (Mac) to activate the Free Transform Tool. Drag anywhere outside the tool's boundary window to rotate all the layers in one go.

3 When you've rotated the layers to a suitably dramatic angle hit [Return] to apply the transformation. Use the Move Tool to reposition the linked layers, so you can see the important details. In our example the characters no longer look like they're lying flat on the ground. They're positioned at a diagonal angle, giving the sense that they could fall to their doom at any second.

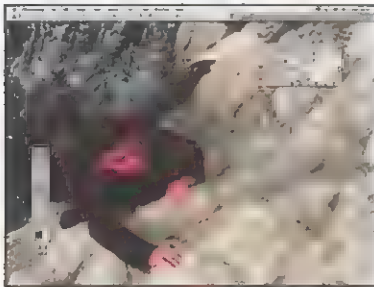
4 The problem with rotating a shot like this is it no longer fits the rectangular landscape frame. We can solve this problem in two ways. First hit [C] to activate the Crop Tool. Drag the tool to select the whole rectangular image. Hold [Shift] to constrain the tool to the image's original aspect ratio, and crop it to hide some of the unwanted transparent areas. Hit [Return] to apply the crop.

Send in the clones

We need to clone out the transparent areas created when we rotated the image



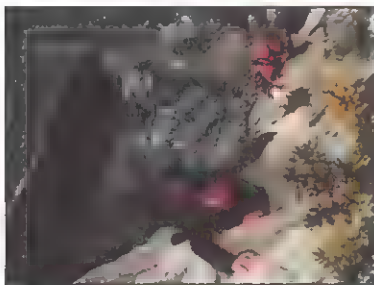
1 After rotating all the layers, you might find some extra bits of grey 'hero' rock that weren't included in the colour correction procedure on page 115. This is because they were located outside the layer's visible frame of view. Select these rocks with the Polygonal Lasso Tool and use the same colour correction values that you used on page 115 (step 3) to get them to match the existing rock colour.



2 Now that you've rotated and cropped your shot to create a more dramatic angle, you have to fill in the transparent gaps around the edges of the cliff and the ocean. Whether it's rock or water we're extending, it's all the same to the Clone Stamp – it works just as efficiently whatever pixels you feed it. Use it to sample the rock face and cover any bald patches in the right-hand side of the image.



3 Once you've cloned out the gaps by the cliff face, turn your attention to the transparent sections next to the ocean on the left of the image. The organic texture of the water makes it an easy job to fill in the gaps with some suitably aquatic-looking pixels. There are no hard-edged details in the waves to cause continuity problems as you clone.



4 To add more colour to the composition, open Bush.tif. Use the tips outlined on page 24 to remove the blue sky from the image with the Magic Eraser Tool. A few clicks should be enough to remove the blue sky. Add the isolated bush to a new layer in the main project. Use the Free Transform and Move tools to quickly rotate and scale the bush, and position it at the top of the cliff.



Transferring layer contents

Instead of using [Edit]+[C] to copy the bush in its original file, and [Edit]+[V] to paste in into the multi-layered project, save time by dragging the Bush layer thumbnail from the layer palette onto the main project window. It will then appear on a new layer in the main project, allowing you to drag it to a layer set.



Fab foregrounds

Importing the colourful yellow bush into the project enhances the image's sense of depth by adding an extra foreground element to the shot. This is a standard photographer's trick for creating a more effective composition – if you can't film it, fake it!

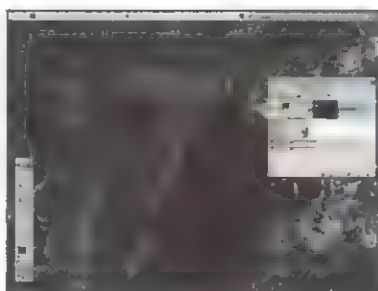
Finishing touches

Let's add a little icing to our creative cake with some computer-generated special effects



Realistic shadows

The trick to successfully faking shadows like those of the CGI lighthouse is to use an Overlay layer blend. This allows some of the original layer's colour to show through. Shadows aren't black or grey, they're a darker version of the colour they're being cast on to. Reduce the Opacity of the shadow layer as well.



CGI magic

We saw on page 104 that Photoshop possesses some simple 3D tools. 3D modelling is a useful tool, as it allows you to add elements to an image that would be difficult to create otherwise. As there wasn't a lighthouse in the source image, I chose to build one in Maya, a high-end 3D package. Needless to say this was a lot faster – and cheaper – than hiring a helicopter to get a photo of a real lighthouse!

1 To give the scene more detail we'll add a CGI lighthouse. Open Lighthouse.tif. Like most CG images, the picture has an alpha channel we can use to make the black sections transparent. Go to Channels, and select Alpha 1. Click on the Load Channel as Selection icon. The 'marching ants' appear. Then click on the RGB channel's thumbnail to return to the full-colour version of the image.

2 Go back to the Layers palette with the selection still active. Double-click on the locked lighthouse layer thumbnail to unlock it. Click on the Add a Mask icon and the area surrounding the lighthouse will become transparent. Drag the lighthouse's thumbnail onto the main project. Rotate it and scale it with the Free Transform Tool, and position it with the Move Tool as shown.

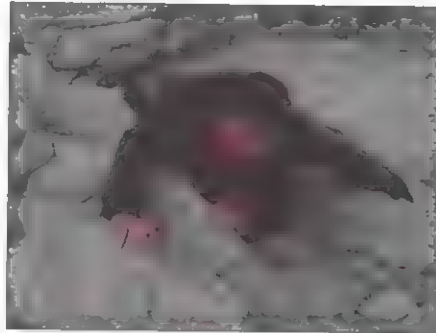
3 Computer-generated imagery is hard to composite convincingly. It tends to stick out like a sore thumb for several reasons. Its black levels are too strong compared with a photographic source image, so reduce them using the technique on page 115, step 3. CG images are very clean and sharp compared to photographs, so add a bit of blur and grain to the Lighthouse layer to soften it up.

4 Right-click on the lighthouse's layer mask and choose Set Selection to Layer Mask from the pop-up context menu. Create a new layer and Edit > Fill the selection with black. Place this layer underneath the lighthouse's layer and use the Free Transform tools to create a shadow for the lighthouse, to anchor it in place. See the sidebar for more shadow-related tips.

The completed image

Step back and look at your finished project. You've worked smarter – and altered reality!

The fantastic thing about Photoshop is that once you've got the hang of its amazing set of tools, the only limit to the kinds of images you can create is your own imagination. Hopefully you've worked through the chapters in this guide and accumulated a new set of skills, as well as honing your existing ones. Seeing how easy it is to create exciting photo-realistic scenes from fairly ordinary source images should inspire you to get out with your camera and collect your own photographic components for



It's amazing to think that you can take people who are scared of heights and use Photoshop to place them in harm's way!

use in future projects. Let's have a final look at the layered file, and note some more finishing touches.



Streamline your workspace

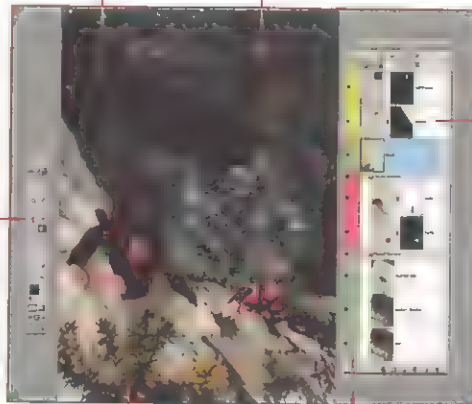
Hit [F] to give yourself a clean and icon-free desktop behind your Photoshop document, and to streamline your workspace hit [Shift]+[Tab] (or press [F7]) to hide the Layers palette. You can still adjust things such as the layers' stacking order without seeing the Layers palette, by using keyboard shortcuts.

ROCKY HORROR SHOW

As the image's elements have been tilted from their original horizontal and vertical alignments, the finished piece works equally well in portrait or landscape format.

The Clone Stamp had a huge role to play by extending the sea and the rocks to complete the photo-realistic illusion.

To help focus the viewer's attention on the plight of the characters in the scene, add a touch of Gaussian Blur to the foreground bush to soften it.



If you can't film it, build it! This 3D lighthouse took 30 minutes to build and render in Maya. There are lots of 3D applications available to help you with your 2D work.

The lighthouse's shadow now fades away gently. This was achieved by applying a Linear gradient to the shadow's layer mask.

Good housekeeping ensured that each layer was labelled and colour-coded so they could be found quickly.

On your CD-ROM

Here's how to get the most from the disc that accompanies your Focus Guide

Featured resources

- Adobe Photoshop Album Starter Edition
- Fuller made video training tutorials
- Over 100 handy Photoshop resources
- All the image files you need for the tutorials inside the Focus Guide

To access the resources and files on this disc, including the huge collection of actions and exclusive video tutorials, first insert the CD into your drive. Whether you're using a Mac or a Windows PC, the disc will work equally well. If the disc interface doesn't run automatically, look at the opposite page to find out how to start your installation manually.

Before you go on

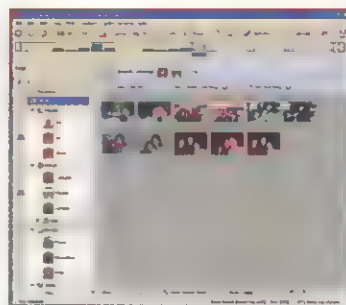
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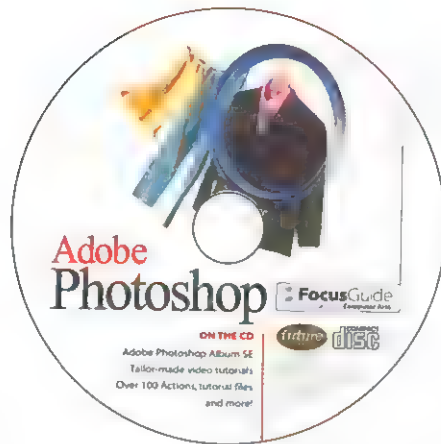
Organise your images with ease

Finding, organising, and sharing your digital photos is simplified considerably with Adobe Photoshop Album 2 Starter Edition. Using this package saves you having to use the software that came with your camera, printer or scanner. All the photographs you have taken are automatically organised by date and are located in one convenient place, so finding a photo is easy. Photo files can be resized automatically, making emailing photos much simpler, or you can upload photos directly to an online processing service. For further information on all of Adobe's Photoshop-related products, check out the website address below.



Adobe's new version of the popular image cataloguing software, Photoshop Album 2.0 Starter Edition

www.adobe.com/products/photoshopalbum/main.html



consult your network administrator before attempting to install any software on a networked PC.

Installation

Once your CD interface has loaded, you can access any of the files, software and other resources included directly from your CD. Simply click on the animated 'Click' link and choose the section that you're interested in from the menu. Our video tutorials require the latest QuickTime Player, from www.apple.com/quicktime/download.

If you have a query about your disc, email our support team at (support@futurenet.co.uk) for help. If you want to talk to a member of the team, call 01225 822743. Note that we can only provide basic advice on using the disc interface and installing the supplied software. We cannot give in-depth help on specific programs, or on your particular system configuration.



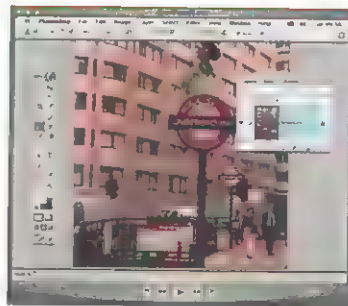
Starting your installation manually

PC users: click on the Windows Start button and click Run. Then click Browse and go to the CD directory in My Computer. Look for a file called PFGi.exe and double-click it. Then click OK in the Run dialogue, and the CD should then load up.
Mac users: Double-click the disc icon, then double-click StartMAC or StartOSX, depending on which OS you're using.

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIALS

Learn how to work smarter in real time

This issue offers you 30 minutes of video training featuring the Photoshop flair of George Cairns. The video starts with the basics of copying and pasting objects within the same image. It then progresses to more advanced work with the Magnetic Lasso Tool and fast layer styles. This will give you all the necessary skills to manipulate images at a more advanced level. In the video George talks you through the copy and past operation used to manipulate the image on page 94 of the Focus Guide, amongst other tasks. In order to view these files you will require free QuickTime Player – if you don't have it you can download it at www.quicktime.com/download.



George Cairns provides you with some valuable tips on how to work smarter in Photoshop. Just watch and learn!

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Over 100 Photoshop resources

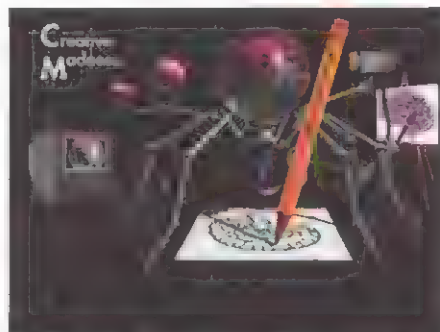
Use Photoshop faster and more effectively with these automated procedures



Useful links

Creative Madness
www.creativemadness.com
 Photoshop Action!
www.photoshop-action.no
 Trevor Morris
user.fundy.net/morris

Photoshop 'actions' are primarily used if you find yourself repeating a particular operation regularly. These actions can also save time when performing a task on a group of images. Creative Madness has provided you with its entire collection of actions, and they're located on the disc. There are also a number of actions from Photoshop Action! at your disposal. Image editing expert Trevor Morris has also contributed PDF files of all the standard Photoshop 7 and CS shortcuts for Mac and PC, with the



You can simplify even the most complicated image-editing tasks with Photoshop actions from Creative Madness

PC documents organised over two pages, making it ideal for laminating as a two-sided quick reference guide.

PHOTOSHOP SHORTCUTS

Speed up workflow by using the mouse less and the keys more

Photoshop expert Trevor Morris has provided this issue of Photoshop Focus Guide with a number of useful resources. There are PDFs of all the standard Photoshop 7 and CS shortcuts for Mac and PC, and all the documents have been organised into two pages making them ideal for laminating as a two-sided reference. You will also find a KYS file with more shortcuts in the 'TrevorsPSCSKeyShorts' folder. Finally, there are extended shortcuts that contain key combinations for the Crop Tool and Stroke option among others. Trevor has done all the hard work for you, so take advantage of his expertise to help you work smarter in Photoshop.

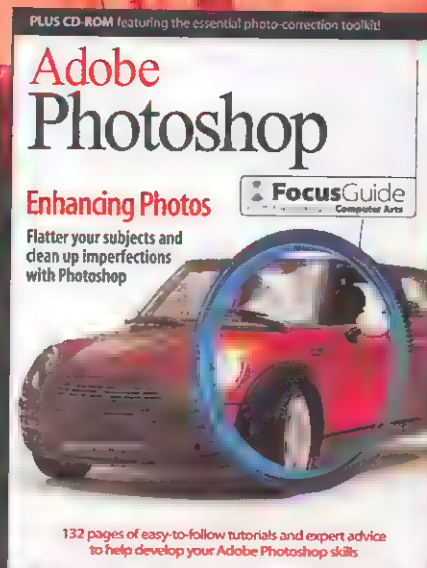
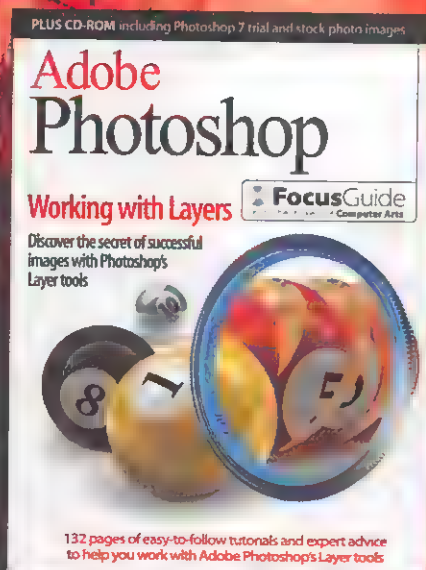


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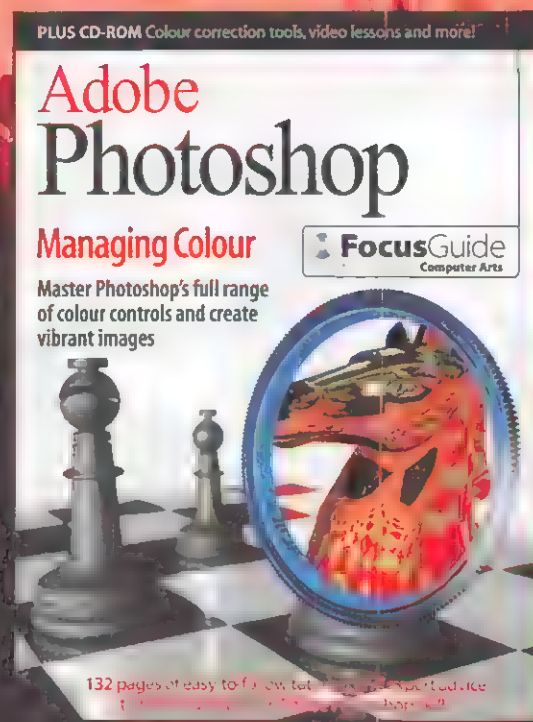


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Glossary

We always try to cut out the jargon, but it helps to add a few words of Photoshop-speak to your vocabulary...

Actions

An action turns a long sequence of manoeuvres into a one-click job. If you find yourself regularly carrying out the same sequence of tasks, you can save yourself time by recording the sequence and saving it as an action. You can view and access your actions via the Actions palette.

Anti-aliasing

Moving pixels around can cause undesirable jagged edges to appear, where edited pixels have not blended smoothly together. Anti-aliasing refers to the process of smoothing out these jagged edges for a more natural look.

Blending modes

Blending modes are used to determine how the pixels in a layer are blended with underlying pixels on other layers. By applying specific blending modes to individual layers, you can create a wide variety of effects.

Brushes

Brushes enable you to paint on Photoshop images with colour, other bits of images and pre-defined patterns. They mimic real brushes in that you can alter the size, hardness and texture in order to achieve the effect you want.

Colour channel

There are three colour channels in all colour images: red, green and blue. Each one contains information specific to that colour. Photoshop enables you to alter each channel independently, making it possible to reduce grainy blue skies without affecting the rest of an image, for example.

Droplets

Droplets take the concept of Actions one step further, enabling you to save your automated sequence as a self-contained file on your desktop. Next time you want to carry out your common sequence of tasks on a file, simply drag and drop the file onto your Droplet – you don't even need Photoshop open to use Droplets.

Filters

A filter is a preset tool within Photoshop, which applies an effect to an image (or a selection within the image). Some filters apply their effect in one click, while others offer more complex settings. Filter categories include Sharpen, Blur, Artistic and Stylize. Each of these offer further options via fly-out menus. For a complete list click in the Filter menu.

.GIF (or .gif)

A type of image file format best suited to producing simple images for the web. Examples include logos, banners, buttons and anything made up of only a few flat colours.

Greyscale

An image is greyscale if it contains no colour information. Almost all digital camera files, for instance, will be in colour, but using Photoshop you can turn them into black and white images, with many gradations of grey. This is known as a greyscale image.

Image size

This refers to the physical size of an image. For instance, a photograph may be 20x15cm. This matters most when you come to printing out the image.

.JPG (or .jpeg)

A type of image file format that gives a desirable combination of small file sizes and good quality photo reproduction. It's commonly used in digital cameras to store the images that you take. The small file sizes also make it ideal for the web.

Layers

Layers containing effects or elements of images can be stacked on top of the original image layer (the background) in order to change the appearance of the image. Layers do not directly affect the layers beneath them, in the same way that a blurry piece of glass placed over a photograph does not actually affect the photograph – in both cases, it is the appearance that is changed, with the original untouched.

Marquee

The flashing dotted outline that surrounds a selection. You'll also see it referred to in some places as 'marching ants'.

Rasterize

When you 'rasterize' a graphical element, you convert it from a vector to a pixel-based image. It will no longer be scalable like a vector, but can still be edited like other images in Photoshop.

Resolution

A measure of how many pixels make up an image. A resolution of 300dpi (dots per inch) is recognised as the minimum if you're intending to print your images. 72dpi is sufficient for images intended for the web.

Selection

Any part of an image which you select with Photoshop's tools,

usually shown by a marquee around it. Enables you to work on parts of an image, or remove them, without affecting the rest of the image.

Thumbnail

A small, 'thumbnail-sized' version of an image. You'll find them in folders of images and in Photoshop's File Browser. Because they're smaller than a full-size image they're fast to load and you can browse through them more quickly, which makes finding the file you're after much easier.

Pixel

An abbreviation for 'picture element', it's essentially a tiny dot of colour on screen. Most images are made of up millions of pixels, which combine to make an image look seamless. Zoom in very close to an image, however, or enlarge it to a high degree, and you can clearly see these individual pixels.

PSD

Photoshop's own file format, which preserves elements such as layers and channels. If you're editing an image file, it's sensible to save it as a PSD, in order for the changes you have made to remain editable when you next open it.

Tool options bar

When a tool is selected, the corresponding tool options bar automatically appears along the top of the Photoshop window, giving you access to various options relating specifically to the tool. These often include such things as Anti-aliasing and Feathering.



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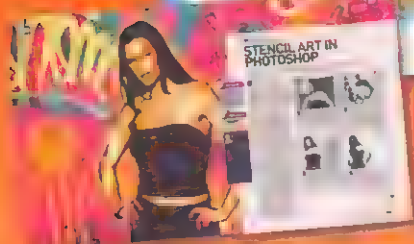
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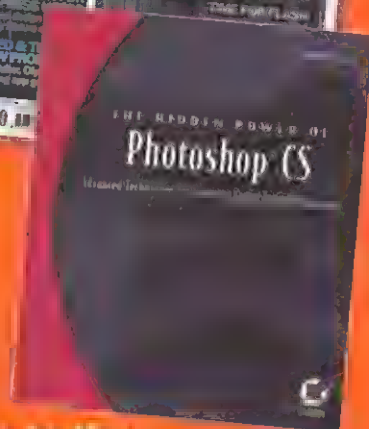


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